JOHN BULL, week ending December 25, 1943

JOHN BULL

VOL. LXXIV. 1958

3D EVERY THURSDAY

THIS YEAR'S BLESSINGS by the EDITOR

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS TO OUR READERS

HIS CHOCOLATE RATION MEANS MUCH TO HIM . . .

To you who read this, chocolate may be important. You may feel its shortage keenly . . . But to our men in the Merchant Navy its importance as a food is often vital!

Thousands of heroic survivors of enemy action at sea have owed their lives to the rations which form part of every lifeboat's regulation equipment. Chocolate is always included . . . . a specially prepared chocolate which gives extra nutrition and does not increase thirst.

Chocolate is issued to all our men in North Africa, Italy and the Middle East. It is an essential part of the ration of every para-troop soldier when he jumps out. It helps to keep our bomber crews fit and alert on long flights over enemy country . . .

Four out of every five tons of chocolate produced at our Bournville factory goes to these and other priorities. This explains why *your* chocolate is scarce and why Cadbury's is sometimes difficult to get.

CADBURY means QUALITY

LIFEBUOY

in the home means protection for the family

Thousands of mothers believe whole-heartedly in Lifebuoy. They rely on it to help keep homes healthy. Using Lifebuoy is such a simple health precaution—but how sure!

Wherever it's used that antiseptic lather washes away the germs in dirt

It's more than a good soap—it's a good habit

2½d per tablet—1 coupon

L 376-690-68 LEVER BROTHERS, PORT SUNLIGHT, LIMITED

KODAK FILM

is in the Hospitals

helping to save life and limb

In the hands of radiologists everywhere 'Kodak' Film is helping to relieve pain and suffering by providing pictures that assist diagnosis and guide the Surgeon. Next time you have difficulty in getting a spool, remember it is because such vital work must come first.

Kodak Limited, Kodak House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2

F. 10D

The need is 'growing'

The Minister of Agriculture has appealed to Victory Diggers to carry on the good work . . . not to rest on their spades . . . not to suppose the nearness of victory means an easing of the food situation. Difficult times still lie ahead—efforts must on no account be relaxed.

What do I do...?

I regard my garden or allotment as a potential source of health-giving vegetables *all the year round.*

I remember that early digging means healthier soil and better crops.

I "keep at it" on my plot until my autumn digging is done, so as to be in time for the frost to get into the soil and kill off lurking pests.

Issued by the Ministry of Information

Space presented to the Nation by the Brewers' Society

Children have a special claim to Horlicks

—please leave it for them

ONE REASON why Horlicks is scarce is that it is included in emergency rations supplied to sailors and airmen, who may have to live for many days without normal supplies of food.

Horlicks also goes to hospitals, to certain war factories, and to miners who are doing vital work under most trying conditions.

Nevertheless, some Horlicks is still being supplied to the shops. Please leave it for those who need it most. And make Horlicks by mixing it with water only. The milk is already in it.

HORLICKS

Are you using ANTHRACITE and COKE?

Broadcast by

FUEL WATCHER

Mrs. Smith ***(Commenting):*** ("One up to me. I *am.*")

Fuel Watcher: "Once an open fire is well alight, it will burn about a shovelful of coke or anthracite for every one of coal."

Mrs. Smith: ("Half-and-half is rather more than my old grate will stand.")

Fuel Watcher: "Don't forget you'll need more draught with these fuels than with ordinary coal, so rake out the ash occasionally from the underside of the fire."

Mrs. Smith: ("That's a point. Perhaps I can make my fire do better with a little more raking.")

DON'T SAVE FUEL IN ONE FORM TO SQUANDER IT IN ANOTHER. Gas, electricity, coal, coke, anthracite—all must be used as sparingly as possible. Make a rule to use less heat, whichever fuel you are burning. Write for leaflet 'How to use Coke and Anthracite in the Home', to Public Relations Dept., Ministry of Fuel and Power, Dean Stanley Street, London, S.W.1

SAVE FUEL FOR BATTLE!

ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF FUEL AND POWER

Just a little **MARMITE** adds flavour and nourishment to War Time dishes

Marmite, the Yeast food-extract, provides the essential vitamins of the B group—thus adding nourishment as well as delicious flavour to all Soups, Stews and Gravies. Marmite makes a savoury filling for Sandwiches.

Don't men know what mistletoe means?

Of course they do! But they're likely to pretend they don't if it means kissing a girl who is guilty of Oral Offence. Play safe! Always use Colgate Dental Cream.

Oral Offence is the embarrassing result of neglecting to keep your mouth fragrant by failing to keep your teeth spotless. Its main cause is decaying food particles between the teeth. *Scientific tests prove that in 7 cases out of 10 Colgate Dental Cream ends Oral Offence—instantly!*

Play Safe! **USE COLGATE'S TWICE A DAY**

1/1 *Including Tax*

JOHN BULL

Thursday, for week ending Saturday, December 25, 1943,
93, Long Acre, W.C.2. Telephone: Temple Bar 2468

"Come the three corners of the world in arms,
And we shall shock them; naught shall make us rue
If England to itself do rest but true."

Straight from the Shoulder

LOOKING AHEAD

IT will be a busy Christmas for our military commanders.

They have been given their orders by the Prime Minister (for whom the whole nation wishes a speedy and complete recovery), and lights are burning far into the night in the Service Ministries.

Preparations are being made for The Day that the enemy fears. Preparations so vast, so intricate, so detailed, that could they be described they would astonish the world.

Sealed Lips

They are not being described. Though it is inevitable that many people must be aware of certain developments, there is now less tendency to talk carelessly than ever before.

This is fortunate, for the lives of tens of thousands of men may depend on a word, and all the prospects of the coming final attack on Europe might be jeopardised by an incautious phrase.

They Don't Get Back

True, the enemy has reconnaissance aircraft. But they have been hampered lately by poor visibility. Besides, the R.A.F. takes care that few return from their inquisitive jaunts over Britain.

Therefore, the clearest proof to the enemy that we are preparing a grand assault is the intensive "softening-up" process that our air armadas are persistently and remorselessly operating. This process is succeeding in its objects.

No Reserve

Not only is it damaging German arms centres and dislocating German transport. It is winging the *Luftwaffe*.

"Younger *Luftwaffe* crews are taxed to the utmost," broadcasts a German fighter ace. "They are detailed to squadrons after only a short period between training and operations."

We know more than that. Their 'planes are going straight from factory to flying-field, thus suggesting a lack of reserves.

Twenty to One

In Italy, for example, we are bringing down enemy machines that left the factory only five weeks ago. Whereas our fighter craft on that battle-front are, on the average, fourteen months old.

You can guess how many thousands of more modern machines we are holding in reserve! Our final assault will be made under cover of the greatest air "umbrella" any general could imagine.

Already, in Italy, we have a twenty-to-one superiority in the air.

On to Rome

As for the land fighting in southern Europe, Alexander's army is nearing the end of its foot-slogging. Beyond are the plains that roll smoothly on to starving Rome.

Across the Adriatic, Tito has announced the decisive moment for battle. His Serb patriots have responded magnificently.

The enemy's retort is a full-scale counter-offensive. But this means the costly diversion of troops that should be held in reserve against an Anglo-American invasion.

Thousand a Day

In Bulgaria, police and Gestapo bolster up a tottering régime by the most ruthless methods of suppression. A thousand arrests a day are made in Sofia—and no country can fight to any purpose in these circumstances.

Rumania and Hungary are at each other's throats. So it is doubtful whether they, too, could give the Germans much assistance against Allied assaults.

Gallant Greeks

And Greece? Thousands of patriots have rioted in Athens, attacking any Germans they saw.

Many were arrested and shot, yet were satisfied to have shown they were not docile slaves. And their comrades will do far more when they receive our signal.

King Peter

Indeed, the situation in the Balkans could hardly be more propitious for an Allied landing.

But young King Peter of Yugoslavia would be wise to get away from the advisers who have so misled him in recent months. JOHN BULL suggests he might profitably follow in the wake of Brigadier McLean, M.P. A surprise appearance among his own people at home would be an excellent precursor of the Anglo-American forces of liberation.

Up to Them

There are other diplomatic possibilities. Following the treaty between Russia and Czechoslovakia, Moscow has offered a similar agreement to Poland. Our Polish friends would be well advised to accept.

Turkey is still a non-belligerent ally. But we may hope that she will not remain inactive in the war's later stages. Sweden, too, may find an opportunity to intervene on our side.

Change in Spain

Whatever their sympathies, the neutrals can no longer doubt an Allied victory. Franco is therefore curbing the Fascist Falange in an effort to placate us. But this will further weaken his hold on his unhappy country, and a new revolution in Spain would be no surprise.

Meanwhile, a far greater issue is being decided in the Russian steppes. For there an effort is being made to snap the backbone of the German army.

Frightful Stake

The enemy has gambled heavily. The battle of the Kiev Bulge will rank for ever among the most frightful hazards of history.

He brought up troops from 1,200 miles away. He weakened other fronts to stage an offensive aimed not merely at restoring his people's faith but at cutting off a great Russian force and pressing it back to the swollen, impassable Dnieper.

Touch-and-Go

For weeks it was touch-and-go, even though the Russians destroyed Von Manstein's tanks at the rate of a hundred a day. But the enemy advanced but thirty miles in as many days, and now his effort is failing.

This will affect all future operations.

Rommel's Return

Had Manstein succeeded, he would have delayed the Russian offensive designed to coincide with Anglo-American moves. Instead, Germany is the weaker to resist.

Rommel, her new anti-invasion chief, must be glumly aware of this factor. But let us not underrate this man—as a few talkative generals on our side were once apt to do.

He is a tough and tenacious fighter. So much so, that our lads will take an especial delight in beating him again!

In Disgrace

His predecessor, Von Rundstedt, has disappeared into obscurity. It is dangerous even for a high-ranking German commander to intrigue for peace just yet!

However, the Germans are not shy of discussing the situation confronting Rommel. They are even obliging enough to inform us that some of our best troops have been withdrawn from Italy, and some of our warships from the Mediterranean, for Western Front operations. And that huge forces are massed in Corsica to invade Southern France.

Supreme Commander

Perhaps they will next announce that General Marshall has finished "tidying-up" in Washington and is on his way here to assume command of the Western Front operations.

The news would underline Mr. Eden's assurance that a plan for ending the war has been agreed upon by the Three Great Powers. A plan for beginning the peace would seem no less desirable.

Foundations

The basis of a really prosperous and permanent peace must be economic.

The conferences at Hot Springs and Atlantic City provided excellent material for building strongly and solidly, but by themselves they would not be enough.

Long discussions have taken place on the post-war use of currency. On the way in which Britain and the U.S.A. use their money after the war will largely depend our hope for a saner world. But Parliament must be watchful.

Co-operation

We renew the warning that it would be unwise to make a firm treaty on currency alone. First must come agreement on post-war economic and financial policy.

So with oil. An American committee has proposed an international pact for the development of the world's oil resources; this, too, is a world matter and must be discussed in relation to the world's economic future.

Soon, we hope, similar news will concern international airways and transport generally.

Master Plan

Above all, we should determine to co-ordinate these various proposals into a Master Plan for the peace. From the Middle East has emerged a master plan for military operations; it should not be impossible to design another for economics.

In other words, we must assure the world of freedom from hunger, from unemployment, from the trade rivalries and cut-throat competition that can so easily promote fresh wars.

Training the Young

What of reform at home? By now we have all had a chance of reading the Government's proposals on education.

Most of us will surely recognise the solid advances they offer. But there will remain regret that they will do little or nothing for many of the children now at school. And they should be coupled with a real programme for training 60,000 extra teachers so that the Bill's provisions might be put into effect more speedily.

(Continued overleaf)

CRISIS

● Once more a coal crisis looms ahead. And this time it may not be settled by a compromise.

The miners are impatient, angry, resentful. With the result that their production is falling.

Look at the situation calmly. Or, rather, at just one aspect of the complex situation.

The men demand a minimum wage of £6 a week for underground workers and £5 10s. for surface workers.

The claim, having been rejected by the mine-owners, has been referred to the national tribunal.

But—note this—the tribunal might well decide that at the present price of coal the industry couldn't afford to pay the men more. And the price is controlled by the Government!

So, really, it is up to the Government—up to the Government that has muddled the mining question for years, the Government that is always telling the men how important their job is to the war effort.

Well, the job is important. None more so. And it should be paid accordingly. Whereas, compared with other industries, coal mining is TWENTY-THIRD DOWN THE LIST FOR WAGE RATES.

"JOHN BULL"

FREE INSURANCE

An announcement of vital importance to every reader will appear in next week's issue

STRAIGHT FROM THE SHOULDER

CONTINUED FROM PRECEDING PAGE

THEY cheered the new Minister of Food last week when he answered his first question in the House of Commons. Because M.P.s have confidence in Colonel J. J. Llewellin.

You—at home—will probably want to murmur a word of approval when you hear him broadcast on Christmas morning.

Aiming Right

The Minister showed the stuff he's made of when he started work within a few hours of arriving home from the United States, where he led the British delegation at the U.N.R.R.A. conference.

Man of principle

He's got no illusions about the job he's taking over from Lord Woolton. But he can't go far wrong if he sticks to his announced principles—to insist on fair food distribution and to take the housewives into his confidence.

It's easy to do the second, not so easy to do the first.

We would like to have seen Colonel Llewellin take a stronger line over turkeys and the Black Market, for instance. So, we suspect, would a few million other people!

Saving His Bacon

Is there no way in which he can punish off-hand (or deliberately rude) tradesmen? A soldier-reader, on ten days' leave could not get bacon on his emergency ration card.

It was just because a shopkeeper chose to be awkward.

The soldier's mother could not get the bacon at her usual shop and was refused at another which had ample stocks. That is damnable treatment.

"Can't Interfere"

The Food Ministry tells us it cannot interfere to the extent of forcing shopkeepers to sell. Colonel Llewellin ought to see it has that power.

Incidentally, we've been asked to find out why the better class of fish is now so scarce while cod and other cheaper varieties are fairly abundant.

Enemy's Fault

The answer is a simple one which the M. of F. has given before. Fishing waters are limited by enemy interference. The places where high-class fish live are mostly out of bounds to our fishermen. The commoner fish are not so particular.

So don't blame the Government this time.

Time-wasting

Another food point. . . . Many hotels have been advertising seats for Christmas banquets a month after all the tables have been booked up.

Some tell you to ring up—a sheer waste of time and G.P.O. electricity which, the Post Office says, it is powerless to prevent except by "moral appeal."

Disloyal

Some hotel managers say such methods "show people how busy they are and is good for prestige."

We are glad to say we have persuaded one or two of them that they're really being disloyal, and are tricking the public.

"Back Kitchen" Toys

The scramble for Christmas toys is now pretty well over, but when you read this there may still be time for a last-minute round of the shops.

When the Board of Trade lifted the quota restrictions at the beginning of the month it was too late to stop the market being flooded with "back kitchen" toys—cheapjack stuff made by black marketeers who have broken every regulation and order.

Danger to Children

More important, many of their products are dangerous. Soft toys—animals, teddy bears and such like—have been filled with floor sweepings, old stockings and dirty rags. There's been no attempt at sterilisation.

So if you're forced to join in the last-minute rush, go to a good shop. There's no sense in risking a child's health—even for a delighted smile on Christmas morning.

P.O.W. Reaction

This first Christmas at home is likely to be not-so-thrilling for many of the returned prisoners of war. A JOHN BULL man in Scotland saw many of them when they first arrived. They were in the middle of the hand-shaking and the celebrations.

Everything seemed fine.

He's been to look up some of the men again. He found them tired of hanging round the old familiar haunts with nothing to do and not fit to do it anyway.

They Want Help

Our correspondent could not find anyone who had been sent to a rehabilitation centre.

Yet in Scotland there are many admirable rest homes used for worn-out war workers. The "millionaires' hotel" at Gleneagles, for instance, has been partly taken over for jaded miners.

That's the sort of place for prisoners of war—infinitely better than the choice between another hospital ward or the old street corner.

Muddle

We're getting complaints about missed train connections from all over Britain. Apparently the fewer the trains the more the muddle.

Often troops hurriedly recalled to units going overseas have found themselves stranded for the night, and have gone through all the torture of dreading that they'll "miss the draft."

Kind, But Helpless

A reader, travelling in the early evening from Hull to Leicester, found she had missed the connection at Grantham by six minutes. So had many other people—including soldiers due back that night.

The officials were kind and helpful. But, "A room in Grantham? Absolutely hopeless." A Nottingham train came in and many of the passengers thought they'd go on there for the night. "I shouldn't do that," they were told. "Every hotel in Nottingham will be full."

Detour

In the end the London-bound "Flying Scotsman" came in. The people who had expected to be making a Midlands train journey travelled to London.

It cost them about 30s. extra. And it added to London's congestion. But what else was there to do?

Turned Off Plot

Many cases of high-handedness by the war agricultural committees have been reported to us this year. One of the worst comes from the Midlands.

An old-age pensioner has had his allotment ruined because the county committee decided to build a road to some storage sheds. No doubt the road was necessary; but so was some apology and some compensation for the winter vegetables that had to be dug up.

There was neither apology nor compensation for this lonely and powerless pensioner.

Going Up

Another report from the Midlands. . . . Fine plans are being made for agricultural workers there. They are to have £1,000 houses at rents of 15s. to 17s. a week. Two of the houses are finished.

The farm labourers will go up in the world (like their rents). But, and this seems incredible, the houses are reported to be without a piped water supply or a main sewage system.

Forbidden by Rule

A Norfolk farmer's lorry engine broke down. He took it into Norwich for repairs and, when he went to collect it, took over a neighbour's engine which also needed attention.

The Norwich people would not unload it. It was against their rules. Instead they sent over a five-ton lorry to collect it the next day. Petrol no object.

Not Much Example

Of course, the Ministry of War Transport does not set much of an example to these private firms. The arrangements for zoning and concentrating transport are, in many ways, ludicrous.

A haulage contractor at Coalville, Leicestershire, had to send his lorry to London. It was unloaded, kept there the night, sent on empty to Cambridge, kept there another night, and then sent home again. Still empty.

Show-piece

Such journeys must be useful to somebody—unlike the tin-crusher and baler lent to a local authority in South-East England, and, so far, useless to anybody.

It was needed urgently so that salvage dumps could be cleared. But it turned up incomplete and could not be used until spare parts were provided.

Pass It On

Application was made to the authorities at once, but the only result so far has been a note to say that the baler can only be retained till the end of this month.

Then it must be passed on to another authority. How they'll love to have it!

On Parade

Another farce in full dress is rehearsed every Sunday morning in the West Country. Fifty firemen are called out in the area every week. They do squad drill so as to form a guard of honour for the chiefs.

Surely this is a case for that peculiar society which tries to stop anything funny on the Sabbath.

In a Hole

A Middlesbrough Corporation 'bus driver was fined the other day for absenting himself from work. The stipendiary magistrate had two similar cases before him and he remarked that it was of paramount importance that men should attend their work regularly.

On the same day the 'bus driver was fined for dangerous driving. His licence was suspended for three months. That should make it very awkward for him to attend to his work regularly.

Where Blame Lies

There were some wise warnings at the conference which women of the London Labour Party held last week. Especially from Mrs. E. M. Lowe, formerly chairman of the London County Council, and a speaker who knows what she's talking about.

She talks sense

Analysing the causes of the increased number of "bad" boys and girls, she said the influence of grown-ups was chiefly to blame. Nearly a third of the children in the Coventry courts lately came from "broken" homes. Another third lacked discipline at home. Get happy family conditions (was Mrs. Lowe's argument), and even with war time temptations our young people will be all right. That's a job for the country's parents.

● An important decision has just been given by a Pension Appeals Tribunal. A man riding on a lorry which was dive-bombed in North Africa claimed that his disability—diabetes—was caused by the bombing. He won.

All ex-Servicemen discharged during the present war on account of diabetes, whose claims to pension have been rejected and who underwent severe bombing during service should apply for their cases to be reconsidered.

Write to the Ministry of Pensions, Norcross, Blackpool, Lancashire.

BEHIND THE NEWS

● **German staff officers, attached to leading generals on the Russian front, have been replaced by radical Nazis, some of whom have been put in uniform to watch the soldiers.**

● *The Rumanian quisling government of Antonescu is in the throes of a pre-invasion crisis. Far-reaching changes which may include the complete taking over by German administrators may be expected any day.*

● Imports of vital raw materials to Germany from both Sweden and Portugal have dropped heavily. Result is new production difficulties for Speer, Munitions Minister.

● **Fortification work on many exposed coastal strips of Hitler's Europe has slowed down because of the recall of Nazi Labour Corps units to Germany where they are needed for urgent air-raid repairs.**

● *Rommel's appointment to be Inspector-General for European defence may precipitate the simmering crisis within the high ranks of the Wehrmacht.*

WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR

By THE EDITOR

THIS YEAR'S BLESSINGS

NOT peace, but the strong hope of early victory, will give us greater cheer this Christmas than we have known since the Second World War began in the sombre autumn of 1939.

Many there must be who mourn their loved ones, and many more who think wistfully of family reunions which must await the outcome of this dire struggle.

But our people as a whole can look back upon the past year with pride, and forward into the years to come with courage and optimism.

For on all fronts, our great cause has greatly prospered. The pattern of victory now emerges clearly through the smoke of battle.

Here in our own country we draw steadily nearer to the saner and happier world which we are determined to build upon the ruins of the old order of fear and suspicion, envy and greed.

JOHN BULL has never ceased to urge the Government to swifter and bolder preparations for the coming peace.

Yet, in this season of good will, it would be churlish to belittle the progress which has, in fact, been made in domestic affairs.

And it would be stupid to ignore the significance of the strong current of public opinion towards ampler reforms and braver decisions.

Let us therefore put controversy aside for the moment while we take stock of certain real gains which have been made on the Home Front since this time last year.

Conspicuous among them is the Disablement Bill, which expresses the national resolve to restore our disabled comrades, as far as is humanly possible, to useful and happy activity.

ERNEST BEVIN has done splendid work in this connection. He was determined that the victims of enemy action, industrial accident and disease should never again be looked upon as so much human scrap.

To our shame, many of them have been thus considered in the past. They were left to sell matches in the gutter, to eke out existence on miserable pensions, or to compete at starvation wages with fit men in an overcrowded labour market.

There is to be no more of this. When the new Bill becomes law the State will, for the first time, treat rehabilitation and resettlement as a single and continuous problem.

It will undertake the training of the disabled, seeking in every instance to fit men for their old jobs or to make them fully competent in new ones.

It will require all employers of more than twenty-five workpeople to find jobs for a certain percentage of these disabled people restored to usefulness, and, in cases where full and competitive activity is not possible, it will itself provide employment in some non-profit-making undertaking.

This Bill, it has been stated, may cost the country £30,000,000 a year, but Mr. Bevin justly contends that it will also add hundreds of millions to the national income.

Above all, it will restore happiness, self-respect and independence to a multitude of Servicemen and workers whose health and strength were sacrificed in their country's service.

The British people has come to realise the true value of man-power; hence the demand not only for full employment but also for the better education of the young.

And plans are far advanced to secure this. Soon after the Christmas recess Parliament will have to consider the Government's Education Bill, which has just been issued, and which involves several important reforms.

Among them are the raising of the school-leaving age to fifteen, the reorganisation of schools into primary and post-primary categories for children up to eleven in the former and up to fifteen in the latter, and compulsory part-time education for young people up to the age of eighteen after they have started work.

Employers will be obliged to allow these youngsters enough time off to attend their classes in which emphasis will be placed on technical and agricultural training.

There is also to be an extension of school meals and an increase in the number of nursery schools. We do not suggest that these reforms go far enough, and it is generally agreed that the leaving age must be raised to sixteen as soon as conditions permit.

But we are certainly making real educational progress and getting appreciably nearer to the goal of equal opportunity for every child in the country.

Yielding chiefly to the pressure of public opinion, the Government has also made several worth-while, though still inadequate, concessions to pensioners.

We shall not be satisfied until the old folk are given enough to live on in reasonable comfort without any kind of humiliating means test, and until the principle of "fit for service, fit for pension," is accepted without qualification.

But here again we must be thankful for the partial progress which has been made in the right direction.

When it comes to housing—Priority Problem Number One in post-war planning—it cannot be said that good intentions are yet being translated into bricks and mortar.

On the other hand, the nation's housing needs have certainly been clarified, and Lord Woolton has committed the Government to a time-table and a minimum programme.

We shall be short of at least 4,000,000 houses when the war ends, and it is proposed to meet this shortage by building 400,000 new houses annually for ten years.

Moreover, the possibilities of prefabrication are being closely studied, and the Government's intention is not only to build but also to provide labour-saving and well-designed dwellings.

Several other important, if relatively small, social reforms have been effected since last Christmas.

For instance, by the adoption of the two halves of the Rushcliffe Report, the whole nursing profession can now count upon better pay, better working conditions, and greater security.

Again, the Government, moved by strong public feeling, has taken steps to protect our young people from overwork and undue strain.

Boys and girls of fourteen and fifteen may no longer be employed for more than 44 hours a week, and those of sixteen to eighteen for more than 48.

The scandalous rent racket in furnished rooms has been controlled, if not actually stopped, and women workers have been relieved to some extent of arduous fireguard duties.

And, finally, in regard to food, this country has virtually accepted the standards which were set up at the Hot Springs Conference, and is certainly planning to provide an adequate standard of nutrition for all its citizens.

WE have no space here to discuss progress in certain other directions, but it is true to say that, in general, this old Parliament, so largely composed of old men, has been more active and more usefully critical than at any time since its election.

Among the general public there is a strong and still mounting interest not only in the Beveridge Plan for Social Security but in all projects designed to promote the welfare of "the common man."

And, apart from politics altogether, we have advanced in medicine through the tremendous discovery of penicillin and patulin, the discovery of a cure for cancer of the prostate, and, in industry, through the development of plastics.

Sterner measures have been taken to break up the Black Market, and in our factories there is to be noted a significant and encouraging change-over from the manufacture of defensive to offensive weapons.

This should be the last Christmas of the war in the West. We may be short of turkeys, but, at least, we are reasonably well fed.

We may still be a long way from the realisation of many of our cherished dreams. But our old democracy has retained its virility, and the will of the people is being gradually imposed upon its elected representatives.

To this extent, at least, we can bring our readers good tidings, and offer them a Christmas opportunity to count their blessings.

Gratitude—But Not Gaiety

ARGUE IT OUT

★

By PALLAS

WHAT blind, arrogant fools we were as the first Christmas of the war drew near four years ago!

★ ★ ★

The shops and pubs were crowded. Homes were gay with holly and mistletoe. Total services creaked under the strain of parcel traffic. There were oranges and bananas, raisins and nuts. There was wine.

Women bought clothes, and were without vision. Men bought cigars and were equally blind.

We all sheltered mentally and physically behind the impregnable might of the Maginot Line. France had 5,000,000 trained soldiers! When the time came we would smash Hitler as we had smashed the Kaiser!

The time came. France's 5,000,000 bayonets crumpled like cardboard. And suddenly we were at war—real war which caught us unprepared and, except for the few of the R.A.F. and the Navy, virtually defenceless.

We have travelled a hard and dreary road since then.

★ ★ ★

To-day, as I look back over the years of war, recording the disasters we have survived and the blunders we have overcome, I wonder whether, even now, the lessons of Christmas '39 are still remembered.

There is again a sort of gaiety in the land. There is an arrogant confidence. There is the supreme assumption that the battle with Hitler is as good as ended.

Shops and pubs are packed with extravagant spenders and expensive drinkers. Shoddy goods are gladly bought at four or five times their worth. Men pay 3s. for a glass of whisky which would have cost 1s. 2d. four years ago.

It seems that the nation is already in the mood to forget the sweat and sacrifice which was so willingly expended since Dunkirk; that money doesn't matter; that the country has earned the right to relax.

The signs are unpleasant. They remind me too forcibly of that other false Christmas when we feasted and wined and danced and revelled, just like marionettes dangled by the threads of Fate.

★ ★ ★

This Christmas should be different. It should be one of quiet thanksgiving that at long last the end of the dark and bitter road seems in sight.

It should be a time for prayer. Pray that in the victory to come as in the days of disaster we remain united, strong and steadfast, resolved to fight the good fight in peace as we have fought it in war.

Refugees clogged the roads. Carrying or pushing their hastily tied bundles, they trudged on—they knew not where

A THOUSAND MILES TO FREEDOM—2

Lone Fugitive in Belgium

★ For adventure at its highest, for British courage at its coolest, the story of Guardsman A.A. has never been surpassed. Now, after two years, the Censor has allowed it to be told. Isolated and captured in the German sweep across Belgium in 1940, A.A. and his companions calmly escaped from their guards simply by walking through a house. And then—

WE paused on the back porch, and I remember how madly my heart was beating. My Number Two said: "Now let's run for it!" My first impulse was to agree and rush blindly away.

Only the depth of the house was between us and the Nazi guard; in a few minutes more the column would be on the move again. The odds were that we should be missed.

I reasoned like this:—

If they miss us, they'll look for us. As moving men, we'll be very conspicuous against this flat countryside. On the other hand, if they don't miss us, we, running, will simply force ourselves on their attention.

Cover! The thing to do is find protective backgrounds and keep still and trust in God.

I caught Number Two's wrist and held it tight. (Later on he showed me four bruises my fingers had made.) There was no need to whisper, for the air was full of noise. All the same, I found myself whispering:—

"No! Let's go over there and keep still."

Camouflage

"Over there" was a high manure pile, with a mossy wall behind it—a perfect background for men in muddy khaki.

I am telling you now that the secret of being invisible lies in keeping still against a background with which your clothes blend.

You may feel hopelessly exposed; yet if your background is right, and above all, if you control your nerves so that you don't twitch or tremble, you may pass unobserved in a flimsy bush twenty feet away from the men who are looking for you. Camouflage is one of the little tricks any good soldier has to learn.

We walked over to the manure pile. I shaded my face with a double handful of very filthy straw. My friends did likewise. Then we squeezed ourselves flat against the warm dirt, digging in a little with our hands.

I was thankful then that brass buttons had been abolished. A burning sun was shining directly on to us. But on the other hand the manure was smoking a bit, and I was relying for some slight protection on the heat waves which were dancing in the yard.

All of a sudden my heart stopped beating. A big Nazi sergeant was coming straight towards me. He stopped fifteen yards away, looked right into my eyes.

I'm caught, I thought, but kept still as death out of sheer desperation. The sergeant turned on his heel. He hadn't seen me.

Left Behind

Sharp, yelling voices of command came from the road. I heard a great heave and scrape of tired feet. The column was moving! It came slowly past the house. It seemed to march in the slowest of slow time, it seemed miles long. The bayonets of the guards seemed thick as bulrushes by a stream, everybody seemed to be looking at us.

"Don't move yet," I whispered. "Hang on to it! Hold still!"

We stayed, stuck against that evil-smelling heap. Lucky for us that we did. Two Nazi infantry men came hurrying through, one of them wiping his bayonet; the other trying to hide the little pink corpse of a baby pig. The one with the pig passed within a yard of me. Perhaps you may have need to camouflage yourself one day. If so, keep still. Stillness is better than a fog for hiding behind.

We stayed until our muscles began to tremble with sheer fatigue, then cautiously crept forward; the column of prisoners was a mile away.

We were free again.

Free: but in Nazi-occupied country that is like saying, "Free in jail."

"Which way shall we go?" asked the Runner.

It seemed to me that our strongest hope lay in the direction of Ostend.

"The Jerries may have got Belgium," I said, "but by God they haven't got the sea! Get that, you guys, the sea's ours: Where there's sea there's boats, and where there's boats there's our boats. What say we try and get to Ostend?"

The Runner said: "The Belgians may have been sort of let down, but you can see they hate Hitler's guts as much as we do."

Suspense

"Bert's right. Let's get a lift in a boat or something. But it'll be a hell of a job getting there."

"Who cares?" said Number Two. They were good, tough lads.

The Runner was right. It would be a hell of a job getting to Ostend, but in my lifetime I've discovered one great thing, and if I never discover anything else I'll still have a philosophy to live by: To know what you are after is more important than the ways and means of getting it. Once you've got an aim and a goal, you've got something to fight towards, which is all a proper man needs, I think.

We struck north. Evening was coming when we sighted a lonely little farmhouse. We were starving again, and more tired with suspense and excitement than we had been that night when we found ourselves surrounded.

I knocked at the door. An old woman opened it. I have never seen such a strange change of expressions in a human face. First there was hope; then disappointment; then just tiredness.

She let us come in. The Runner understood French better than I did, though I also had picked up a good deal of the language during my months in France. She talked very fast.

The Runner said, interpreting:

"She lost her two sons the other day. She lost her husband in the last war. She's all alone here now—Jerry has taken everything she ever had. When she heard us knock . . . well . . . she sort of forgot."

There was bread, soup and cheese. We ate like wolves—we didn't stop to think, I'm afraid, whether we were eating up all she had.

Hate-Crazed

At last she said: "You should hide those English uniforms. There are clothes here. I have clothes but no sons; take the clothes. Go, God be with you. Only it is, you understand, I who am telling you—you must beat the Boche as you beat him last time.

"Do you hear? Only this time you must crush him. Do you understand? You must crush him, you must kill. They—what pity have they ever shown?"

So she went on. Her anger was terrible. Sometimes, when I have a bad night, I dream of her old face crazy with hate for the Germans who had smashed all that she had ever cared for and left her alone.

There were several suits of clothes—Sunday black and working blouses. We took the roughest things we could find, hoping to pass as countrymen or labourers. She must have had fine sons, the poor old lady. We were all big men, but the clothes hung on us like clothes on wooden hangers on a hook in a shop.

We said good-bye and thanked her: then went on. The food had put new heart into us. The clothes had given us new hopes. We decided that now it would be wiser to travel boldly by day and bluff our way through if challenged, rather than risk arousing suspicion by moving at night.

On the way we fell in with a Belgian business man who had taken as much of his portable property as he could carry and run away—and lost it all on the way. He told us that the British had surrendered.

He said: "It's a fact. I assure you, Messieurs, the British have capitulated. France and England have both fallen. Germany has won the war. It is over, finished, it is the end, it is the end of the world!"

He waved his hands as he stood there, his voice fading away and a terrible red dawn coming up behind him, and for the moment our hearts sank. Then the Runner said: "How do you know?"

"I know it for a fact."

"It's against reason," said the Runner. "England surrender? Even if she was beaten she wouldn't surrender, and she can't be beaten. It's not common-sense."

Closing-In

Yes, we might be lost in a strange country, with all the odds in the world stacked up against us, but we knew our England—by God we did!

We left the little, half-crazy man behind us. Looking back, I saw him staring after us, and began to feel a little uncomfortable about him. Mightn't we have let our natural feelings get the better of our judgment and talked a bit too freely? In times like these, whom dared we trust?

I said: "Let's move fast, I've got a funny feeling something's going to happen."

We pushed on. We were then about 25 kilometres from Ostend. Like good old soldiers we had our "bar," our alibi, ready for use. We wanted to get to Ostend to visit relations.

The Runner invented a street for them to live in, Rue Grande Bretagne. That was an unlikely name for a street—but the Nazis are military to the backbone, and with people like that, the more unlikely a story is, the better it goes down. I took the name of Gievaento, which belonged to a Belgian wrestler I once saw fight.

We were thinner than rakes now. We'd averaged one meal every two days since our capture. The Nazis had commandeered a good deal of the available food supply.

Fifteen kilometres from Ostend we stopped to beg a meal, again at the door of a farmhouse. There we heard bad news. There would be no chance of our

By GUARDSMAN

A.A.

getting away via Ostend. That was a closed door. Ostend had been evacuated.

And while on our journey we had seen comparatively few Germans about the countryside; now they seemed to be pouring in from every point of the compass.

We had been stopped twice, and each time had by mumbling under our breath and shaking our heads been pushed on contemptuously as half-witted yokels.

But now the Nazi ring was closing. Nobody was safe. The Nazis assume that all men are their enemies, and how right they are!

Three Chances

The Runner said: "We'd better split up. In one group we stand only one chance in a million. As three separate men we stand three separate chances."

They were as true as steel and straight as guns, those two boys. The Runner wanted to go immediately across the frontier into France. I was in favour of waiting a bit to see how the land lay. Number Two agreed with the Runner.

They went together, intending to part company later on. We simply said: "All the best," as if we were being taken in lorries to different battalions in England before the war. Just a brief handshake, then they took the road.

I have cried only three times since childhood. That was the first time, when I saw them go and knew that I was alone. The other two occasions were in the months that followed, as I will tell you later on.

Not long after I learned that the Runner and Number Two had been captured near the frontier. They disappeared then as if the earth had swallowed them.

In hardship you learn the true value of a man. I learned theirs, and I loved those two. Though, if we meet again, in this world or the next, it will be with nothing more emotional than a "hallo" and a handshake.

I dragged myself along; there was nobody with whom I could discuss plans now. But I wanted to get to France.

I reached Lille, poor Lille. It had only just built itself up again when the Germans again blasted it down. Germans were everywhere; my position was hopeless. I wandered, starving and ill, like a man in a bad dream. The people about me also seemed stunned and silent, brooding, stifling terrible feelings inside them.

Not far from Lille there is a wood. I had roamed all day. Night having come I lay down. Having lain down I knew that I was too weak and sick to rise again.

Brave Woman

God forbid that you should ever know the dreadful weakness of starvation. I lay, looking up, between the leaves I could see one star.

Something blotted this star out. It was a face which seemed ghostly and far away—a woman's face.

I felt her hand on my forehead. This woman was the most courageous person I have ever had the honour of meeting. I am grateful for having known her.

Apart from the fact that she saved my life in that wood, what she showed me convinced me that, even if the impossible happened—if darkness beat light, and evil took a stranglehold on good—there would always be something to lift man up again towards freedom.

Next Week: **City of the 5th Column**

OPEN LETTERS

To our SERVICE MEN and WOMEN Overseas

DEAR FIGHTERS,—In millions of British homes this Christmas Day there are people thinking of you, praying for you, wishing, in vain, that you were at home to share the Christmas dinner, no matter how meagre or humble the fare.

I'm really sending you this message on behalf of all the splendid wives and mothers who for years have hidden from the world their fears and sorrows and trod bravely along the road of endeavour and sacrifice.

You know what I mean—the brave smiles of farewell, the intimate and loving letters that reach you, the absence of whining and complaint, and the constant vision of full, happy days when it's all over.

The empty chairs are being treasured and kept warm. There'll be many a silent toast to-day to "Our Tom," "Our Jack," out fighting heaven knows where, or awaiting the call to action.

Behind those toasts their hearts are, maybe, heavy. For they know that as the war nears its climax some of the empty chairs will never again be claimed by their rightful owners.

But the courage remains. It has never faltered. In the days of waiting and of toil, the faith of your women at home has stayed firm and unshaken. You in khaki, navy and air force blue *are* their Faith. They know you won't let them down.

And though they may consider it impertinent of me, yet I dare, on their behalf, propose on this day of the Master's coming the toast: "To our men and women overseas. God bless them and look over them."—JOHN BULL.

The Rt. Hon. Lord WOOLTON, Minister of Reconstruction

MY LORD,—Nothing has heartened me more in recent days than your unqualified statement that your job is above politics.

You told your peers in the House of Lords' debate on post-war reconstruction: "I do not belong to the Labour Party, or to the Conservative or Liberal Party. While I remain in office I am not going to have anything to do with any of your political Parties. I am going to remain completely outside, and that is my value at the present time."

Disraeli declared: "There is no gambling like politics." In the great task you have undertaken there can be no gambling. The whole nation, looking to you as the source and inspiration of that better Britain we must have, will give thanks anew for your courage not only in shouldering the burden of your new Ministry but in putting the politicians in their place.

The country and the happiness of its people are more important than all the politicians who ever tried to cut a dash at Westminster. They are issues which dwarf the aims and activities of Party tub-thumpers.

I know that their contentment and their right to live decently are very dear to you. And because you have cut away the last vestige of ties with the political machine, they know that you will brook none of that interference or criticism which would have confused and intimidated a weaker man.

You got us our food when the days were full of anxiety. And I've no doubt that in the days to come you'll give the people that happier Britain they so devoutly wish.—JOHN BULL.

Mr. P. R. MORRIS, C.B.E., Director-General, Army Education

DEAR SIR,—"The schoolmaster is abroad! And I trust more to him, armed with his primer, than I do to the soldier in full military array, for upholding and extending the liberties of his country."

It is no doubt presumptuous of me to remind you of the source of the above quotation. But Baron Brougham, Lord Chancellor of England, the man who wrote it, was not only a great jurist but an ardent educational reformer.

There was, perhaps, more need for education 110 years ago, when Brougham sat on the Woolsack. Yet I am inclined to the view that never in the history of Britain, or, for that matter, the world, has the need for true education been so urgent or so imperative.

When you were a young man, probably still at college, the War Office launched an educational scheme for the benefit of the occupational Army on the Rhine.

It was an impressive scheme—on paper. There were masses of books, hordes of educational officers—some of whom could not even spell properly or write a grammatical sentence—and courses galore.

The whole thing, except for young soldiers who passed an examination of matriculation standard, was farcical.

Your intention is to make a proper job of it; "to make the bridgehead between the soldier and his work in civilian life" are the words you use.

You also describe your task as "mainly a post-war job."

But surely the time is ripe now to go ahead with your plans? And surely, too, you must prepare the minds as well as the hands of the men who soon, we hope, will reclaim that heritage of freedom and opportunity which they have defended with their lives.

Neither justice nor decency, neither liberty nor toleration, can be maintained so long as ignorance clouds and betrays the mind of man.

Yours is a great responsibility. Not all men would relish it. But I feel convinced that as "The Head" of the Army you'll turn out some really good "boys."—JOHN BULL.

Mrs. E. M. WHITE, General Council, League of Nations Union

DEAR MADAM,—If reports are true, you told a meeting of your Council: "All this talk about trials (of war criminals) is unreal and bunkum." You suggested that the people who have suffered could deal out retribution.

I disagree flatly with you. The whole purpose of bringing Axis warmongers, murderers and pillagers to justice is to set down imperishably in history the world's determination that there shall be no profit, but only dishonour, in plunging the world into war.

The trials will reflect the majesty of international accord. And they will serve as a warning to any who in after years may be tempted to disrupt the peace of the nations.—JOHN BULL.

Mr. HENRY WILLINK, M.P., Minister of Health

DEAR SIR,—Early in your ministry—you took over from Mr. Brown only a few weeks ago—you have been put to a severe test: an all-in battle with our old enemy, influenza.

The swift way in which you have marshalled the resources of the country and thrown them into battle suggests that you are not making the mistake of underrating your opponent.

The enemy is still hitting back with his myriad-microbed guns. But I hope the emergency measures you have adopted will in turn soon have his measure.—JOHN BULL.

P.S.—A few shiploads of oranges and other fruit from Africa would make grand ammunition to destroy those microbe guns.

Sir RAYMOND STREAT, Chairman of the Cotton Board

DEAR SIR,—Your recent reference to profits is interesting. "Economists," you say, "seem to have started a kind of heresy hunt against the wicked business man for wanting to secure a profit, as though profits were a matter for shame."

All sensible people will agree that there is no shame in profits. But there is shame in the way they are distributed. When the welfare of the men and women who make the money is the first charge on profits that shame will be removed.—JOHN BULL.

★ HANNEN SWAFFER SEES THE UNITED NATIONS FIGHTING IN HARMONY AND WANTS THE GREAT CO-OPERATION TO CONTINUE AFTER VICTORY

Are We Nearer The Golden Age?

I OFTEN wonder what became of the shepherds to whom —so says the ancient chronicle—the angel of the Lord appeared and said, "Peace on earth."

And why is it that we are told nothing about what happened to the wise men from the East when they got home again?

Did the shepherds merely tend their sheep, as before? And were the wise men any wiser? The records are silent on the matter.

What, too, would History say, if all the facts were written down, about the effect of the story of Bethlehem on the world in general?

When I visited the Church of the Nativity eleven years ago, I found dissension even among the different sects of Christians who used the building.

To such a degree did they quarrel that, not many years before, it was the Sultan of Turkey, a Moslem, who ordered a lost nail to be replaced in the silver star that marked the alleged birthplace.

Squabbling Sects

The different Christians could not agree about who had the right to buy a new one—and so the Sultan ended the row by doing it himself!

Nor is this sort of thing peculiar to the birthplace of Christianity. Almost everywhere, various sects quarrel among themselves. In some places, such as Ireland, the bitterness of their differences not only does not bring about peace, it goes so far as to prevent it from being established.

In some countries these differences have, in past ages, even led to war.

In Asia, missionaries who seek to persuade sceptical natives that Christianity is the only way out of the world's woes will not, even today, attend a Communion service together!

Can one wonder that orthodoxy is appealing less and less to the man in the street—that, this year, the "*Daily Mail* Year Book," which has in its last seven or eight issues recorded an increasing decline in worship among all the denominations, leaves out for the first time figures which, apparently, have been refused it by at least some of the sects.

Good Will Season

Christmas, anyway, is one of the most beneficent of all our institutions. If only for a day or so, it radiates more good will than is usual. Even the irreligious make it a reason for showing an unwonted generosity of spirit.

But—the carols have been sung, century after century, and with little effect on the peace of the world. The same sermons have been preached for nearly 2,000 years, and war gets bigger every time one starts.

Not only people of altogether different faiths kill one another when the fighting begins.

Christians who profess the same belief in the Yuletide story of how an angelic host sang of peace on earth and good will towards men make war on Christians of another race just as though they were the "heathen" whom they jointly accuse of idol-worship.

Once again, this week-end, we shall hear the carols. Many of us will join in the singing.

Our Chance

But meanwhile, while "Noel" is sung in churches and chapels and by carol-singers in the streets, the most terrible of all wars will be going on right across two continents. In the slave lands of Europe there will be torture, imprisonment and death.

And—this is the blunt truth—wars that will be even worse will be waged in the future, carols or no carols, churches or no churches, until the end of time unless man does something serious about it.

Once again—just as he had one in 1918—he will have a chance. Soon, because of his knowledge of why he failed last time, he will have a greater opportunity than before.

Chiefly, from 1919 to 1931, the League of Nations failed because of hesitancy and timorousness, because the big nations bossed the small ones, because it feared to use the force behind it to impose its decisions, because . . . oh, because all the old greed and rivalry were there still behind the parade of pious platitude and fatuous phraseology.

Sided with Japan

Then, after 1931, Britain failed the world. When Simon was Foreign Secretary he sided with Japan, the first of the aggressors, and then, by turning down Germany's demand—her right—for equality of strength, either in terms of armament or disarmament, gave Hitler the one excuse he wanted for obtaining power.

Now, this time, it is obvious to any reasoning man that air power can be made the deciding factor in the maintenance of peace.

If the nations of the world will only agree to control, between themselves, all aviation, military and civilian, one high-powered bomb dropped on the first breaker of the peace could end a war directly it started.

If the nations of the world do not decide to do that—well, war can be started again, at any time, by any nation that likes to do so.

But, even while I write these words, plans are being prepared for rival air-lines, rival airfields and rival commercial 'planes. In that rivalry, unless it is stopped at birth, the old war-makers—trade competition and the scramble for markets—will soon be busy.

The result must be that, directly the nations have rested long enough to replenish their strength, another world conflict will be in sight.

But who is going to give up that self-pride which, necessary as it is during a war, becomes a menace to peace directly a war is over?

Are we prepared to see R.A.F. pilots put under the command of an international body chiefly made up of foreigners? Even our natural pride in the men who won the Battle of Britain, except so far as it insists on them and their dependants being adequately recognised, may be a dangerous hangover.

Yet, in the Southern Pacific, pilots of our race are serving under General MacArthur, an American. And not only here, but in North Africa, American airmen fly under British commanders.

Indeed, the camaraderie and good-fellowship which, in the Mediterranean and in Italy, make the Anglo-American forces so magnificently a single unit are one of the wonders of the war.

Real Allies

Similar results would follow, I am sure, a need for linking up the armed power of Russia and Britain—at least, so far as the men in the ranks were concerned. The R.A.F. squadron that went to Russia months ago came back with heartening stories of their reception.

Indeed, but for the great difficulties in the way of sending after them necessary re-equipment, other squadrons would almost certainly have been sent.

Soon, no doubt, a shuttle service of bombers flying—North, South, East and West—across Germany will bring about at least a temporary linking-up of the air-raiding might of the three great Allies.

If it is essential for victory in this war, why is it not essential for victory in the next war—victory, I mean, before the next war begins?

In the way of this ideal there stand "commercial interests"—the guys who want to wage trade wars on one another, stop controls, kill planning and end co-operation.

They think not in terms of peace but in terms of profit.

It was they who betrayed the world's peace aims in the shameful years that followed 1918.

The Truth

Yet, every Christmas they sang carols and prated about good will just as did the kindly folk and the well-meaning people who, in the end, were the victims of their greed.

And so, unless something is done about it, it will go on until the end of time.

That "something" not only includes the international control of arms. It must consist, also, of a practical realisation of the truth that unrestricted competition must, before long, lead to war—and that only by pooling and community of effort can we prevent it.

We are, this year, one Christmas farther away from Bethlehem. Are we one Christmas nearer the Millennium?

Or is that just a delusion, merely something you sing about?

★ This Christmas is full of hope: the four other festivals celebrated since 1939 were not promise-crammed.

By A. G. GARDINER

FOR the fifth time Christmas brings its ancient and beautiful message to a war-stricken world. We can receive it with gladness, for it is a message of triumph.

In the darkest hour we have "never doubted clouds would break," but this Christmas we know the clouds have broken and see the goal shine clear ahead.

How clear may best be appreciated by a glance at the Christmases that have gone before.

Who does not recall that first war Christmas of 1939? It was lit by the false glow of one brilliant but misleading event.

We had been at war four months, but except for the dramatic sinking of the *Graf Spee*, nothing had happened to strike the imagination.

A strange calm hung over the battle-front and we were tempted to see in the sinking of the pocket battleship an omen of much greater importance than it was.

We had won the first round. We celebrated the event by entertaining the victors at the Guildhall. We kept our Christmas in good heart and in high hope. Perhaps the might of the enemy had been exaggerated.

It was the Christmas of cheerful illusions.

* * *

Those illusions had vanished by the Christmas of 1940. That was our blackest night of the war. France down and out. The British Army only saved by the miracle of Dunkirk. Invasion only warded off by the miracle of the Battle of Britain.

The whole Atlantic coast of Europe in the hands of the enemy. Italy in the war on the side of the enemy. Our cities nightly in flames. We stood alone against a conquered and embattled Europe.

Even our best friends had given us up for lost. Yes, it was our darkest as well as our "finest hour."

With Christmas, 1941, the scope of the war had widened sensationally. All the world was in it. Hitler had given us great allies—first, Russia, then America.

But he had gained an ally himself, and the torrential sweep of Japan through the Pacific to the gates of India darkened that Christmas season. Pearl Harbour, Hong Kong, the sinking of the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse*, the fall of Singapore, the East Indies, Burma—one blow after another fell like hail upon an astonished world.

But Russia had astounded the world, too. Moscow had flung back the hosts of Hitler. And the treachery of Pearl Harbour had been a little too successful. It had lit a flame of vengeance in America that meant mischief.

That Christmas the war was in the balance. Which way would the scales tilt?

* * *

The answer came on the eve of Christmas, 1942. It came in a double shout, from Stalingrad on the Volga and from El Alamein in Egypt.

The Fifth Christmas

All through the year the odds had seemed to favour the enemy. His great pincer movement to the Middle East had brought him deep into the Caucasus and to the gates of the Suez. His junction with Japan in the Indian Ocean seemed perilously imminent.

But Stalingrad and Alamein turned the tide. And there were other significant things.

In the far Pacific Japan's *blitz* was fading out. Things were happening in the Coral Sea, off Midway Island in the Solomons and New Guinea that showed that the tide was on the turn there too.

And, not least of all the omens, it was no longer the British cities that were going up in flames. It was the German cities. We had won the Battle of the Skies. We were winning also the Battle of the Atlantic.

It was the Christmas of a great promise.

* * *

And so we come to this Christmas of 1943. The promise has been fulfilled—full measure and overflowing. We have seen the grand strategy of the Allies taking shape with the power and majesty of an inexorable fate.

We have seen the great German war machine rolled back five hundred miles from the Caucasus and the Volga towards the Polish border. We have seen the enemy chased out of Africa, out of Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica.

The Mediterranean is ours without challenge from Gibraltar to Syria. The navies of Italy and France—so far as they exist—are ours.

THE WHOLE STRATEGIC IDEA OF THE ENEMY IS IN RUINS. EVERYWHERE HE IS ON THE DEFENSIVE. THE SOUTHERN WALL OF HIS PRISON IS CRUMBLING. THE EASTERN WALL IS CAVING IN.

Italy has surrendered, and is fighting on our side. The Axis is dead and Hitler sees his own fate prefigured in that of his wretched jackal, Mussolini.

We may be grateful to the wisdom of our leaders and the heroic peoples who serve under them

The Luftwaffe is beaten. The U-boat is beaten. We have established our supremacy on sea, on land, and in the air.

Hitler's Germany stands as we once stood—*alone*. It stands enveloped by the victims it has despoiled and who thirst for the hour of revenge.

It is faced by the mightiest combination of power the world has ever seen. It is condemned by the moral judgment of the world, and hated as the barbarous enemy of the freedom of mankind.

Its people, fed for years on lies, knows that its doom is sealed, and is only prevented from collapsing internally by the murder squads of the unspeakable Gestapo.

One by one the hopes, held out by the incomparable bungler who has been worshipped as a god, have been blown to the winds. Take a sample of them.

The British Empire was a rope of sand that would disintegrate at the touch of war. False.

Russia was a sprawling giant that would be knocked out of the ring in ten weeks. False.

America would never fight, and if she did she would be too late to influence the issue. False.

Japan in the war was more than a balance for America. False.

The U-boat would cut Britain's life-line. False.

The Luftwaffe's supremacy in the air could never be overtaken. False.

* * *

Finally, the Allies, like the British Empire, were a rope of sand, who would fall asunder under the pressure of German propaganda.

America would be poisoned against Britain. Britain would be poisoned against America. Both would be poisoned against Russia by the bogy of Bolshevism.

This has proved the crowning miscalculation. The greatest event on the eve of this fifth Christmas of the war has been the series of conferences which have consolidated the Allies in an indestructible unity, for the purposes not only of the war but of the peace.

WITH THIS EVENT GERMANY'S DEFEAT PASSES FROM THE REALM OF PROBABILITY. IT HAS BECOME A MATHEMATICAL CERTAINTY. IT IS, IN THE LANGUAGE OF ANOTHER FORM OF CONFLICT, "A LAY-DOWN."

The end is longer in coming than some of us hoped last Christmas. But, looking back to that dark Christmas of 1940, with its revelation of the might of the enemy and of our own lamentable plight, we may marvel at the great mercy that has been vouchsafed to us and be grateful to the wisdom of the leaders and the heroism of the peoples that have made that mercy possible.

In the light of that mercy, let us receive the Christmas message this season with uplifted hearts and with the high resolve to speed the day when

"Man to man the world o'er
Shall brothers be, for a' that."

Wanted—A New Information Bureau

IT is one of those incomprehensible things. . . . It began with our invasion of Italy. Italian guards flung open the gates of prisoners of war camps.

Our boys poured through to take their chance of fighting their way through to the British lines—or Swiss territory.

Scores of thousands of British wives and mothers were torn with a new anxiety.

What about *their* men?

Were they among those who had been recaptured—perhaps after a scrap—and sent to Germany?

Or were they wandering through the mountains of Italy, enduring hardships it is difficult to guess at?

Many, we knew, were being hidden away in Italian attics until British or American troops came marching in. Was that to be their luck?

★ ★ ★

Or, luckier still, had they already reached the safety of the British lines, was a message already on the way carrying the great news?

I repeat, it is one of those incomprehensible things.

Somebody advertised for news of one such loved one in the PERSONAL column of the *Times*.

And almost at once the wives and mothers of Britain made that little corner of "The Thunderer" their clearing-house for information.

★ ★ ★

It was a clearing-house without any sort of organising committee or sponsors of any kind. It just grew, like Topsy—out of the hunger of British women for information, or the passionate desire of women with good news to pass it on to their sisters.

Nothing could have been more spontaneous.

And now, day after day, you'll see a whole succession of those advertisements.

Captain R. P. T. Gibson, of the Middlesex Yeomanry, has cabled that he has "reached British safely: now in hospital recovering from slight wounds."

Captain Hugh Cruddas, M.C., R.H.A., has reached the British lines safely, has information about Campo 49.

Lieut.-Col. C. D. Steel has reached Switzerland, has news of Campo 29 from which he escaped.

And all the time women seek news of *their* men who got away, but of whom nothing has been heard.

"A sick mother asks for news—" says one advertisement.

The relatives of men of the highest ask for news—or offer it. The relatives of men of the lowest rank too.

What a story could be built up if one could get all the facts.

But one can't.

The facts are contained in letters from the colonel's wife to the private's wife, from the private's sister to the major's mother.

They are sacred to the people concerned.

★ ★ ★

Yet one wonders—why not an official scheme for the exchange of such news?

How glad would be our prisoners of war released by the advance of victorious Allied armies, or exchanged under repatriation schemes yet to be arranged, to file information about all they could remember of the men the have left behind!

Life would begin again for countless thousands of families who wait—and hope.

MAURICE FAGENCE.

★ The City of London is a fantastic lucky dip

My Queer Shopping Adventures

By Will Scott

I WALKED across London the other day, from Charing Cross to the City, looking in shop windows. They say there is nothing to buy this year. You'd be surprised. I was.

There are the oddest things to buy.

Where would *you* go if you wanted to "furnish" a church or buy an illuminated address? I didn't know. I know now.

On the whole the City held the best surprises, but there were one or two on the west side of Temple Bar. The farther west, I found, the more conventional the things you saw in shop windows, but there were one or two eye-openers.

Such as nicely prepared speeches for political, social, Masonic, philanthropic, staff and other dinners and events, "for busy men who have not the time" to prepare their own speeches, and "others who perhaps feel they lack the ability to do justice to the subject."

Short speeches, 21s., complete with toast of company, guests, etc., and responses. Eight to ten minutes, two guineas

You certainly live and learn when you start to keep your eyes open.

And foreign stamps.

In the Strand you may buy green corn in the cob, as well as telescopes which close to two inches. And this year's Directory for Liverpool and suburbs!

You can buy also little bronze busts of Mr. Churchill, made by the Barbara tribe of Australia. Twenty-five shillings, with five of the shillings to war charities.

And not far away you have the choice of eight different perfumed snuffs!

In Fleet Street, or so a wide sign on a window claimed, you may have your boots repaired While You Wait. And buy almost any kind of foreign newspaper.

And foreign stamps. . . .

Around Ludgate Hill, which is the gateway to the old City, I found bottles of coffee made from dandelion root. Not new to you, perhaps, but new to me.

Also I found sheets of religious texts, thirty-six to the sheet, to cut out and stick in albums, as well as large religious "subjects," mounted on rollers and varnished, and announced as suitable for schools. Published at 4s. 6d., they were "offered" at 1s. 6d.

Although I remember seeing them from my earliest days until that moment I had never known where to buy such things.

Nor had I known where to buy those large carved-out letters you see over shops and pubs. I know now. I can even get—or so a notice in the shop window assured me—complete outfits for carving my own letters if ever I care to go into that line of business.

I could have bought a haircut in a "barber shop" in Farringdon Street. This, too, was new to me. In my time on earth such places have always been hairdressing "establishments" or "saloons."

Also, in one window, I saw low-sugar marmalade for diabetics.

And, in another, foreign stamps. . . .

The vicinity of Cheapside, Britain's first High Street, and the very first market known in this country, had its own little surprises. To say nothing of an unexpected repair business. A card in an open doorway made the modest announcement: "We recondition old shuttlecocks."

I made my way north from the Bank, to see what else I could jot down on what was now becoming a kind of fantastic shopping list.

Steel skates!

And, of course, foreign stamps. . . .

Bottles of writing-ink of every imaginable colour, from black to white. Though I saw no black notepaper for the white ink.

I did see a large supply of garden hammocks, as well as stone tobacco jars and wooden paper knives made from the blitzed bits of the House of Commons.

"I suppose you can get "gut reviver" anywhere. But it was my first sight of the stuff.

Old ways hang on in the City. There gum is "mucilage" and ink is "writing fluid." But there are new ways, too. There was an invitation outside a chemist's shop to "Leave Your Headache Here."

And more shops devoted entirely to the sale of foreign stamps. If my expedition is anything to go by, this must be one of the most flourishing businesses in Britain. You come upon such shops all over the place in London.

There were novelties Liverpool Streetwards. From a sampler dated 1870 to lorgnette opera-glasses. Even ten years ago these might have been bought for the opera. Now, I suppose, they are bought largely for museums.

I found water-softeners for 4½d. I bought one and it works!

I could scarcely believe my eyes when I found, round the corner from Liverpool Street Station, hay-rakes piled on a pavement outside a shop. Wooden hay-rakes in Bishopsgate! Ready for next year's harvest. But where within a dozen miles of the City could you make hay?

Yet there they were. I wondered how you got them home to the old farm. You'd be popular with one on a busy train in the black-out!

In another street were monster log-cutting saws with double handles. Just in case the old farm included a copse you wanted to saw down. And you'd be popular on a busy train with *that*!

Farther east—of all things on earth—I saw a diabolo outfit!

I saw one window completely filled with enamel labels—"Beware of the Dog," "No Hawkers, No Circulars," "Keep off the Grass"—and at last I know where to go to solve yet another problem.

And one fragile old shop, which had survived both Fires of London (1666 and 1940), had its windows filled with nothing but rope and string. String fine enough to tie up a fairy's parcel, rope thick enough to tie up a barge.

I found bundles of stick cinnamon and rolls of "substitute" glass and straw hats such as we used to wear when first Our Miss Gibbs came to town.

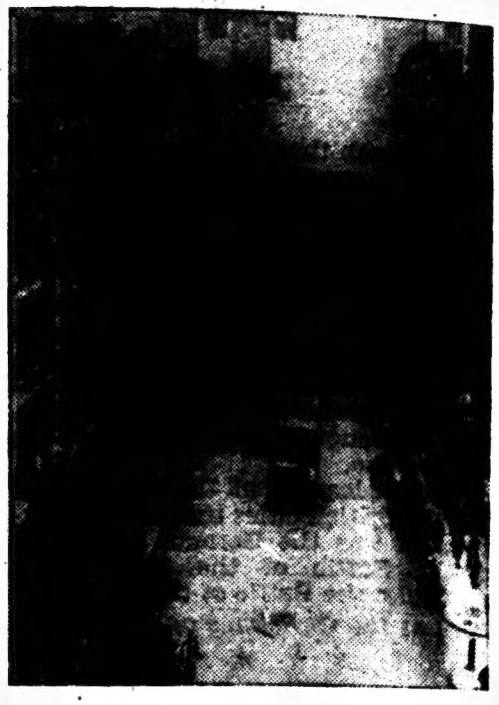
In Leadenhall Market and the Cathedral-City streets which cluster round it I came upon more of the unexpected.

Old-fashioned wax tapers. Not odd? Well, where I live we haven't seen one since the war began.

Leather finger-stalls so stout that they looked as if they had been made to last a lifetime. With ten of them, a stray piece of leather and a reel of thread, I should think you'd have the makings of a good pair of garden gloves.

I found "agricultural mustard seed" by the sack.

And ducks, geese, fowls, cats, dogs, goats, all alive.



You can have your old shuttlecocks made young again in Britain's first High Street—Cheapside. This is how it looked before Goering's airmen paid it a visit!

And little green bay trees, already flourishing, at 7s. 6d. each.

And, I need not say, shops selling nothing but foreign stamps. . . .

There was one shop which took my mind back to those pioneer days of radio when many of us "built our own." There on a shelf were the component parts of petrol lighters. Standards (whatever they are), wick holders, flints, undercut wheels (whatever *they* are), everything.

A new hobby for the coming black-out nights, I suppose.

But the two best bits had saved themselves for last, as best bits always should.

Real turtle "meat" in glass jars!

And, in a box on the pavement, haggis! It was my very first sight of such a thing. I stopped and stared—and so did dozens of other people, keeping well back, as though the things were alive and might bite. I never knew they looked rather like turnips made of grease.

There was a label on them. "*No coupons required.*"

After that I stopped looking. I remembered I still had my Christmas shopping to do!

British Soldiers Train on Skis

WITH the return of ice and snow to Russia, news comes of raids behind the German lines by white-clad, noiseless Soviet ski-troops.

But Britain has her "skating army," too. You'll find it—of all places—in the Middle East.

From the sun-drenched terraces of the hotels on the Beirut water front you can stare at the snow-capped Lebanon mountains.

Climb those mountains and, above 5,000 ft., you turn round hairpin bends to emerge into a world of dazzling white. Here, in this Syrian loveliness, you'll find hundreds of men training for icy warfare

When General Blamey brought the Australians back from Greece two years ago he decided that in future every division should have its ski troops.

The training school he started is now a British concern and receives men from the whole of the M.E.F.

The senior instructor is Major Jimmy Riddel, captain of the British Olympic Ski Team and a world-known expert.

Most of his pupils are young fellows who had never seen a ski in their lives. But in less than ten days they are able to go up to 10,000 ft. and shoot down at forty miles an hour without fear of mishap.

And—who knows—they may one day be putting their skill to grim use in Hitler's shrinking Europe!

HUMAN MACHINE

Create Your Own Destiny

Every now and again one meets people who say they are "fatalists." They say they believe in man's destiny being fixed. They assert that they can do nothing about it. They claim that whatever happens has nothing to do with their merits or demerits. It is Fate.

Well, it's a nice comfortable theory from one point of view. If you can really believe that it relieves you of a lot of responsibility.

But it's very noticeable that such people, Destiny notwithstanding, always do their best to avoid any unpleasantness that Fate may have in store for them!

But it's not a true theory. And it's not true that Destiny and Fate are one and the same thing. Fate? Who knows what Fate is? But we do know what Destiny is. *Destiny is something we create for ourselves.*

There is no more iron law in the mental and spiritual world than the one that gives each one of us our immediate deserts, neither more nor less. Good or bad, we earn what we have. *Our Destiny, in fact, depends on what we do with what we have.*

If we choose to love insincerity, ignorance, callousness, cynicism and intolerance, isn't it easy to see what we shall reap from such a harvest?

Isn't it equally easy to see what will come from a love of tolerance, sincerity and a passionate search for truth?

You don't have to be much of a philosopher to see the right answer to that one!

And the right choosing of the right way of life is what creates our Destiny. What use is it talking of "Fate" when the choice is so clearly ours?

Midnight in the Haunted House

By Gerald Kersh

IT was so dark that they could not see each other. Sitting very close together for the sake of companionship, they waited in the room and talked.

The house was empty. It had been left to decay. The mice and the spiders had taken possession of its hollow, echoing rooms. Dampness was eating the plaster. The wind had stripped the tiles. Day and night water dripped through the ceiling of the drawing-room: it had formed a pool on the floor, and this pool, seeping down, fell drop by drop into the cellar. The silence magnified the sound of the dripping water, the cellar reverberated like a sounding-board.

"George!"

"Aha?"

"Wouldn't it be queer if we *did* see something?"

"Fred, for the fiftieth time: you'll see nothing. For the simple reason that there's nothing to see."

"But they swear the place is haunted, George. Fifty years ago——"

"Fifty years ago!" George sneered. "It's always fifty years ago. Never yesterday, never an hour ago—always a nice convenient fifty years or so ago. Don't be a baby! Why should this place be haunted?"

"They say somebody——"

"SURE, sure; they say, they say. Somebody murdered somebody else, and therefore this, that and the other. Fools. I don't believe in these nocturnal hauntings, and never will. Just show me something, something to see, or feel; give my sanity and senses some evidence to satisfy them. Then, perhaps, I'll believe in hauntings and nonsense."

"Oh," said Fred, hastily. "I'm not saying I'm a believer. No, no. I simply . . . ah, keep an open mind on the subject of the supernatural. I'm ready to be convinced."

"You mean you're anxious to be convinced, you old hypocrite."

"It's cold. . . . It's miserable here, isn't it, George?"

"Naturally it is. There's nothing here: wherever there's nothing it's cold and miserable. Now stop anticipating things. If there's anything to see, we'll see it. If not . . . we won't."

"I wish I had your nervous make-up. You haven't got any imagination at all. You don't seem to fear anything whatsoever. It must be wonderful to be like you, George."

"NONSENSE, Fred, nonsense, my friend! I use my reason. I refuse to believe in old stories just because they tickle my imagination. This disgusting nonsense about haunting is an insult to the intelligence. These poor souls who frighten themselves into the jitters with empty tales disgust me.

"I brought you to this so-called haunted house to prove to you that what they say about it is sheer imagination, balderdash, bunk! Go over the facts for yourself: what do you know—know for a fact about this place?"

"Well . . ."

"Well?"

"I . . ."

"Ha! You know nothing about it, except what somebody told you. Is that it?"

"Well . . . listen, George. You know old Archibald?"

"Yes?"

"He told me that he'd stayed here many years ago, and that he wouldn't pass another night in this room for all the——"

"FRED, Fred! Old Archibald is half mad . . . a rambler, a witless old creature fit only for sleep and droning talk about rubbish such as this. And what did he say he'd seen here?"

"To be exact, he didn't say exactly. He simply told me that it was all like a horrible nightmare, and that an intangible horror came over him. He walked about to see what would happen—it was just about midnight, as it is now—and as he reached the top of the stairs he heard a noise behind him.

"A light flashed, he says. He heard a horrible, shuddering voice, and he swears that he saw . . . something . . . something like a man following him; a man with a ghastly face which quivered and trembled. The whole apparition seemed to waver and shiver like water in the wind.

"Old Archibald crouched in the corner, and when he dared to look again——"

"—— His apparition was gone, and didn't come back again, eh, Fred?"

"Well . . . something of that sort."

George laughed heartily. "Does it occur to you that, for example, two separate individuals might come out of curiosity to a house with a reputation like this on the same night? Each sees the other. Both go away convinced that the place is haunted."

"It might be so, of course, but . . ."

"Get out of it!"

A mist had risen. "I wish I'd never come," said Fred. "I have a feeling . . ."

"You're going to stay," said George.

He swears that he saw something

"You're going to be convinced. Why, if there were such things as they say there are, haunting houses and places—heavens, my dear fellow, the whole structure of reasoning would go cock-eyed. That way lies madness!" George raised a deep, powerful voice: "I challenge any power of darkness to show his face to me here and now!"

Silence, except for the dripping of the water in the deserted house.

Fred trembled, and crouched closer to George, who, however, cried out again:

"Come out and show yourselves! Come on, all you nameless terrors! You don't mean to say you're *afraid* of us?"

"Don't, George!"

"Fred, shut up! We're giving the hauntings a fair trial: darkness, midnight—what more do they want? If this house is haunted I'll——"

"What was that?" cried Fred.

George listened coolly. "Dripping water."

Fred shuddered.

They waited.

Time crawled away: the night was passing. Fred said nothing. George hummed a song.

After a long time George sighed and rose. "Well?" he asked, "are you satisfied?"

"YOU'RE right, George," said Fred, with a shamefaced laugh. "You're absolutely right, and I was a damned fool."

"It's nearly dawn. Shall we go?"

As Fred and George went out of the old dark house, Fred muttered:

"It really *was* crazy for a ghost of my age to believe in the existence of human beings!"

George laughed. "Human beings! What next?"

Then the two ghosts flew away.

What Feeding the Army Means

HOW does John Bull tackle the terrific task—it swells in bulk and import every day—of feeding his millions-strong armies?

In an average lifetime a man will eat and drink about enough to fill twenty-five one-ton trucks, and when you have to cater for hundreds of thousands of hungry mouths in the field of battle alone, it becomes a prodigious undertaking.

One of the biggest problems that ever faced our military administration was the watering of our desert forces. The Eighth Army needed 5,000 tons of water every day, and for some time four-fifths of it had to be pipelined across 4,000 miles of desert from the Nile.

This great big food baby is carried by the Royal Army Service Corps. In the field its vast convoys of General Transport Companies are continually on the move, carrying stores from railhead to Forward Motor Centre, where a week's stocks are held in bulk.

From there smaller convoys proceed to the respective Divisional Headquarters with the day-to-day needs of a division. Here, stores are again split up, and trucked forward to individual units.

★ ★ ★

Primitive affairs were the Army's old-time bread wagons, which used to rumble along in rear of the troops. To-day a field army has its own fully appointed bakeries, staffed by a trained personnel of R.A.S.C. bakers, with complete equipment of dough troughs, peels, bread-racks and ovens.

The field ration is 1 lb. per man per day. Each section of a mobile bakery caters for 30,000 troops; out of its busy ovens, therefore, pour 15,000 loaves a day. A medium-sized invasion army will polish off at least 100,000 loaves every day of the week.

★ ★ ★

But the fighting man does not live by bread alone. Along with the mobile bakeries are field butcheries, equipped with cold storage depots for housing frozen meat, butter, cheese and special refrigerated fare for forward hospitals.

A vast enough undertaking in its normal aspects, what makes feeding John Bull's Army a really complex affair is that in it are such varied nationalities as Indians, Gurkhas, Cingalese, Czechs, Poles, Yugoslavs, French, Dutch, Zulus, Syrians, Somalis.

In all over 140 separate ration scales have had to be evolved to suit the tastes of soldiers whose homes are spread throughout the world.

Race alone makes a first-class problem. Soldiers of scarcely two nationalities feed alike. Issue rice to a British Tommy serving in India, and he would hold his nose in disgust—and with every right. Reversely, health, endurance and morale of Indian troops would suffer severely if divorced from their habitual diet of rice and chupattees.

Battle rations issued to Indian troops include tinned milk; they receive, in fact, four times as much as British Tommies. But Sudanese soldiers can't stomach it. They're accustomed to goat's milk—fresh. And if they cannot have it that way, they prefer to go without.

If nationality contributes to the catering conundrum, religion does so even more. It affects the Indian soldier at every hour of his life. Pigs have caused more bloodshed in India than any other factor.

So, pork in the Moslem ration must be replaced by fish. Hindus, for their part, venerate the cow; to them, therefore, beef is strictly taboo. Orthodox Jewish soldiers must have kosher meat.

The Army has the services of eminent civilian cooks and catering experts; scientific advisers; a food investigation board; a research station; fruit, vegetable and meat laboratories. And that goes for feeding under as many conditions of war as is reasonably possible.

★ ★ ★

Varied and extravagant claims have been made for a mystery tablet that is supplied to German troops. Allied scientists have produced some remarkable pills for use in emergencies. Capsules for preventing sea and air sickness, smokeless tablets for heating food without the aid of a fire.

And—following months of experiment with specialised food products such as yeast extracts and shark-liver oil—a tabletised food with tremendous concentration of essential food values, to serve, when necessary, as the paratrooper's last deadline against starvation.

Captain MARTIN THORNHILL, M.C.

"I was one of the paratroops engaged on a special little job — "

VOICE OF THE TROOPS

NOW in hospital recovering from wounds, Sgt. N. J. Cooper, of a Parachute company, sits up and tells of an adventure behind the enemy lines in a letter to his uncle at North Square, Dorchester:

I was one of the paratroops who were engaged on a special little job at ——. When I baled out over enemy territory my 'chute caught in a tree just as I was landing. I hung suspended about ten feet from the ground, but I was so entangled that I could not free myself from the harness

It was dark, but the enemy could see the white of the 'chute and blazed away at it with machine-guns. Actually it was their bullets which cut through the 'chute cords, and so dropped me to the ground. I got two bullets in my shoulder, which did my shoulder-blade a bit of no good, but I managed to crawl under a bush, where I lay in great pain for what seemed to be hours.

Actually it was only twenty minutes before I heard the soft, pre-arranged signal of some of our fellows who had landed near me. They found where I was, and made me as comfortable as possible before going on to "accomplish their objective."

Later I was taken care of, and next day we linked up with our land forces, my shoulder was patched up and away I went to hospital. It is going on well, and this is not a bad spot. Hospital life is restful.

Jungle Trek

The thrills and hazards of air patrol on the Indo-Burmese frontier are just a job of work to R.A.F. men stationed in India. Air Gunner A. Pritchard, R.A.F. India Command, writes to a friend at Harding Avenue, Bidston, Birkenhead:

We were to patrol a certain sector of the Indo-Burmese frontier in our Blenheim. Receiving instructions, we set off at 6.00 hours with a load of twenty-five pound bombs, which are more effective than "block busters" in this wild stretch of country.

As we moved over the jungle we could see our troops beneath us, moving along with Bren tractors and jeeps. Later we flew over a narrow river on which were two Jap rafts, simple-looking affairs made apparently of tree-trunks lashed together with the vines of jungle creepers.

Seeing these bulky craft we swung in to attack. The forward gunner was the only one with a chance to give a few short bursts before we got our surprise. Without any flash or warning bark that we saw or heard the Japs started to blaze away at us. Those rafts were the most cunning bit of camouflage I have ever seen.

Red and blue tracers came up at us from each of the river banks and from the rafts. There was a terrific din, and in the middle of it all our port engine burst into flames, and the forward gunner's compartment was soon a mass of fire, which swept towards us.

The captain shouted over the intercom. that we were to bale out, as it was impossible to control the fire, much less put it out. The heat was unbearable as I staggered through the smoke to the emergency exit. The second pilot baled out and I followed. The wireless operator had been killed by the first barrage.

I threw myself out of that blazing death-trap and began to fall like a stone, then came a gradual descent to the ground, and as I floated down I began to wonder what would happen to us if the Japs happened to be about down below.

I touched ground on a rocky mound and from there I could see, about a quarter of a mile away, one of the crew taking off his 'chute. At that moment he looked my way and waved.

It was the second pilot. . . . Congratulations over, we set off through the jungle in the direction we thought would bring us back to our lines. Luckily we came across a stream where a few small animals were drinking, and we did the same, drinking to our hearts' content.

Then after plodding on until it was nearly dark we settled down for the night, covering ourselves with huge leaves and a straw-like substance which we found in the undergrowth.

Nothing happened that night and with the dawn we set off again. For three days we struggled on, getting weaker and more hungry the farther we went.

It was on the third day that we heard shots in the distance, and as they began to sound nearer we took cover and waited, wondering if we were near friend or foe. Later we heard men crashing through the undergrowth and shouting. They were British voices we heard! We cheered, and how we cheered!

The next thing I remember was lying on my back in a jeep, on my way back to safety, a good meal and a bath.

SHE WILL HAVE TO MAKE THE CHOICE

ACCORDING to the dictionary, to "swipe" means "to deliver a swinging blow," but in colloquial speech it has come to mean "to steal" or "to take by force." A young soldier writes to me because he has a nasty twinge of conscience about "swiping" another man's girl. Here is part of his letter:

I met her last summer while I was stationed in Scotland, he writes, and I told her I wished I had met her sooner. She admitted being attracted to me, but said she was unofficially engaged to a chap serving abroad. She had agreed to wait for him.

The outcome of this conversation was that I resolutely put her out of my mind, but five weeks later I went to spend my leave with friends in the Midlands and there accidentally ran into her again. This led to other meetings, and on the last evening I confessed that I was hopelessly in love with her. She felt the same about me, but was divided between her love for me and her sense of loyalty to the other man.

If there is one thing I abhor, it is the idea of swiping another man's girl while he is away, but I hope and trust you can see some way in which the business can be straightened out. If you can do this I shall be very grateful.

THE soldier himself is divided between his love for the girl and his sense of loyalty, so they are both in the same boat.

But the problem is really the girl's, and she will make the final decision.

It is always possible for her to change her mind about which man to marry—it is every girl's right. The man must accept his fate whether it be joyous or melancholy.

But I dislike that word "swipe," not because it is slangy, but because it contains a false idea: an idea that the woman remains passive while two men compete to get her. She rarely remains passive. The issue means too much to be treated in such a fashion.

★ If you are in doubt, write to HUMANIST, at 93, Long Acre, London, W.C.2. You will receive a guinea if your letter is quoted on this page (without of course, giving your name)

The whole notion reminds one of Kipling's story about the mating of the seals where the females wait to be grabbed with apparent indifference as to which one does the grabbing. That method may satisfy the women in some countries, but not in Great Britain.

Do you think, begins another reader, that a girl is happier in marrying above or below her own social standard? My friend married well and her husband is very much in love with her, but she suffers misery and constant heartache through her in-laws, who look down on her. The result is that she is now a bundle of nerves and has developed a bad inferiority complex.

But now her own daughter has become engaged to a man who is below her and she (the mother) is terribly upset about it.

I have tried reasoning with her and have reminded her of her own experience. I know cases where the wife is looked up to and adored by a husband who is socially an inferior.

In your work which brings you into touch with so many people you must know whether it is a mistake to marry outside one's own level, and I should like to hear your answer to my question.

We may disagree with the whole idea of social distinctions and castes, but we cannot deny their existence. No doubt scores of married women have married "above" them, and scores more "below." I am willing to stand corrected, but I think the latter are generally the happier. It is horrible for a wife to be looked down upon by her husband's family.

In theory a wife takes her husband's social position, and if it were carried out the problem would disappear. Unfortunately people rarely act according to the theory and hence a great deal of misery is created.

A very frank letter comes from a man who tells me that patience and tolerance are not among his virtues.

It is like this, he writes, I am blessed with a little more than average intelligence and I have absolutely no time for people who show the least sign of stupidity. My wife is one of them.

I make no allowances, but afterwards, when the damage is done and a quite unnecessary scene has been enacted, I realise how unreasonable and inconsiderate I have been. It is a first-class handicap. I am deadly serious and perturbed, and I want your advice. My disease is pretty bad, but I am a good patient.

It would be easy to make some cheap sneers at a man who says he is more intelligent than the average, but I have no desire to indulge.

He probably is exceptionally intelligent, and therefore naturally impatient with people who are stupid. He can't "suffer fools gladly"; they make him angry.

Soldiers spend thoughtful hours over their letters

Until three or four years ago, every educationist proclaimed that the schoolmaster's first duty was to help children to develop their personalities to the full; but since the war started there has been a change.

The idea has dawned that people have to live together, and it is enormously important to cultivate those virtues which make for harmony.

This is not easy. We start life by insisting on our own rights and we yell if we are frustrated. But there are other children to be considered; we have to give as well as take; to make concessions to keep the peace.

HENCE the importance of nursery schools where children have to practise these social virtues.

"Talent is developed in solitude; character in the stress of life," said a philosopher. By all means let us develop all the talents we have—imagination, reason, power of expression, creative ability—but if we cannot live peaceably with others these talents will increase our unhappiness.

★ Have you an interesting letter from a relative in the Forces? ONE GUINEA will be paid for each one published—more if a good adventure story used at greater length—and all the letters are returned. 10s. 6d. for Readers' Views. Address all letters to "Voice," JOHN BULL, 93, Long Acre, London, W.C.1.

Saturday Night

A boycott of the local cinema provided a little Saturday night excitement for some of the troops in the Middle East. Cpl. C. Lane, M.E.F., writes to his brother at Chelsea Road, Bolton, Lancs:

The camp went "wild" on Saturday night. The boys had decided to boycott the local picture house, where prices had been increased by another piastre (2½d.), making the admission charge 10d. for the privilege of sitting on hard forms; to see an old and tattered film for the third or fourth time, plus a newsreel of what happened about five years ago.

So all the lads sat outside, did a little picketing, and sang songs, while the first performance was given for the benefit of two native sergeants, who must have sneaked into the cinema when we weren't looking.

The audience for the second show that night was smaller! In addition to having our fun, we won, and next week prices come down to the old level, but I doubt if the quality of the films will go up.

Mistaken Identity

When Sgt. J. Donlin met in North Africa a friend from his home town whom he had not seen for years they had to celebrate, and also do a little shopping. The shopping was not so good! He writes to his wife at Clarkes Hill, Whitefield, Manchester:

Albert and I had an afternoon off, so to celebrate our reunion we went into town, and hoped to do a little shopping to fill in the time. We talked of the old days at home over a few glasses of wine, and then decided to have our photographs taken, but we were unlucky, as the photographer had no films or plates. So we went shopping. I tried to get cosmetics, stockings and a silk underset for you, but this was not our lucky day. The shopkeepers seemed to be under the impression that we were millionaires disguised as troops.

READERS' VIEWS IN A SENTENCE

WHEN a firm of retailers were fined for overcharging it was stated that there had been ten previous convictions. I wonder how many times this firm had "rooked" the public without being detected? Why not bar them from trading.—E. Sanders, Harefield, Middlesex.

★ ★ ★

A bungalow which cost pre-war £550 is now on sale at £1,300! Why not pass a short Act limiting the price of house property to 25 per cent. above the pre-war value?—W. Scott, Seaward Avenue, Boscombe.

★ ★ ★

At a recent meeting addressed by the Minister of Fuel and Power, held in broad daylight with sunshine streaming through the windows, at least sixty electric lights were uselessly burning, wasting valuable power for at least two hours.—"Observer," Rotherham, Yorks.

★ ★ ★

A young married couple applying for permission to buy curtains were refused because they were unwilling to buy Utility furniture they didn't want. Is this Nazification?—G. A. Downer, Blidworth, Mansfield.

Fight the Menace of Dirty Milk

I DRAW the attention of both Parliament and public to one of the gravest scandals which JOHN BULL has ever considered it its duty to ventilate.

It concerns school milk.

Milk, as everybody knows, can fortify children against dreaded tuberculosis—now officially admitted to be on the increase.

It can also cause tuberculosis. And spread it.

It is therefore one of Officialdom's most vital responsibilities to see that the milk supplied to the millions of children who should live to be tomorrow's citizens is the right kind of milk.

But is it?

That question asked, I shall express no opinions so that I cannot be accused of publishing alarmist views.

I shall confine myself to facts.

And what is to be deduced from those facts can be left to the intelligence of the parents of Britain and the Members of Parliament elected to represent them.

First fact is that many local authorities are more than a little anxious about the milk supplies they have to issue to their schools.

Some have made very thorough investigations.

One is the Gloucestershire County Council, in whose area one of my representatives has been making inquiries.

CONDEMNED

In the three months from July 1 last, 1,140 school samples were taken.

Of these, 547, roughly half, were found unsatisfactory because they were dirty.

Two tests were made at one particular school at two different times.

In one case the milk was described as unsatisfactory. In the other it was condemned outright.

Gloucestershire is setting up a body with a view to a thorough inquiry.

Thanks, Gloucestershire.

There's Manchester. Manchester keeps a very good eye on its school milk. It is said that that eye looks an angry one.

Mr. J. Henderson, M.P., has explained why.

The figure he gives of the amount of school milk found unsatisfactory is 75 per cent.

He adds that distributors are having to accept low-grade milk which they are compelled to mix with the good, contaminating the whole lot.

I am desperate to express an opinion on that, but I won't.

Milk and bottle must be above suspicion

Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire, had fifty-two samples taken of the milk being supplied to schools.

In twenty-nine cases the milk was found to be not satisfactory.

Now we'll move up to Lanarkshire.

There's a headmaster there named Robert Stark, M.A., B.A., B.Sc.

His school is a Junior Secondary School at Baillieston, on the fringe of Glasgow.

Most of the 400 pupils are the youngsters of miners and factory workers.

Quite rightly, they are as important as any children in the world to Mr. Robert Stark.

And if he can't be sure of giving them milk that will fortify them against disease and not give them disease, he's not going to give them milk at all.

For eighteen months he found reason to complain about the milk being sent to him.

ONE-MAN CAMPAIGN

He took it up with the Education Authority, the Sanitary Inspector, the Milk Marketing Board, the School Management Committee.

He was still fighting when, one day, his janitor asked him to come along and see a hundred milk-bottle empties.

All had pieces of grit in them. In some cases the pieces of foreign matter were a quarter of an inch long.

"You can take the milk or leave it," he was told.

So Mr. Stark promptly decided to leave it.

[redacted] SPECIAL COMMISSIONER

Even Whitehall was shaken by this earth tremor in distant Lanark.

Lots of authorities had talked about school milk. Here was a definite challenge.

First official comment came from Mr. R. C. T. Blair, Director of Education. He's all out for the very best for the bairns, although he did say that "perhaps Mr. Stark's action was not the correct remedy."

2,500,000 COWS

Next the School Fee in Chief to the County said the grit was possibly getting in from the crates, and that the supplier hoped to remedy matters by packing the bottles upside down after washing.

But Mr. Stark saw no solution in that. He spoke of occasions when mice had gnawed at the bottle-capsules. Of bottles not properly washed *inside*. Of dirt on top of bottles that had been stood the right way up.

He persisted in his refusal to give the children such milk.

The one-man campaign goes on in Lanarkshire.

Whole authorities are beginning to join in the campaign, for, as revealed at the recent Sanitary Inspectors' Association Conference in London, there are 2,500,000 dairy cattle in this country which receive no regular veterinary inspection.

And now, perhaps, having confined myself to facts, I may be permitted to finish on an opinion of my own.

It is that that campaign should rage from one end of the country to another, until every mother and father in the country can be certain that the milk being supplied to their youngsters as part of the school routine is of the life-giving and not the death-dealing sort.

HIS GOODNESS, YOUR GUINEAS

THE World Service Group, with headquarters in a £1,000 mansion in Belgravia, is at it again!

An ex-bank clerk, Mr. C. S. Collen-Smith, the "Leader" and founder of this organisation, is a man of charm and personality. At the moment he is engaged in a campaign to charm the guineas out of your pocket, all in the interests of a brighter and better world.

Collen-Smith claims that "our Inspirers in the Beyond have spoken of the present world events and declared how much our work would be needed." Among other things, the World Service Group claims to heal and comfort "those who 'lose' loved ones by air raids and warfare."

This presumably justifies the "Leader" in making a double-barrelled appeal for your guineas. First you are invited to pay an annual subscription of a guinea to the "Healers' Association," which entitles you to a post free copy of "World Service," the monthly organ of the Group. Then for another guinea you can become a member of the World Service Group.

Mr. Collen-Smith thinks that the Group will have a great part to play in the post-war world. We doubt it.

Incidentally, we should be glad to see a balance-sheet of this organisation.

PUBLIC BENEFACTOR

This week's £1 1s. has been awarded to Mrs. F. M. Davis, of Penrhyn Avenue, Rhos-on-Sea, North Wales.

Information is invited concerning any suspected scandal or ramp. Address your letters to Public Benefactor, JOHN BULL, 93, Long Acre, London, W.C.2.

With God's Help the Soul Survives

WITHOUT God's help we will find that we cannot get along, there's too many pitfalls in life, and there's too many things to go wrong. Too much to strive for and bear, too much utter loneliness, but with God's help there's a golden edge even on weariness.

WITHOUT God's help we will find that life's road is far too steep. There's too many heartbreaking hours and too many tears to weep. Too much anger and greed, too much falseness and sin, but with God's help even the darkest hours let a shaft of heaven in.

WITHOUT God's help we will find that we eventually go down. Life's stage is so cold and vast and its drama outweighs the clown. There's too much care and remorse, too much suffering and drawn-out pain. But with God's help the soul survives, and then lives on again.—J. M.

Do you look lovely when you smile?

the answer's on the tip of your tongue

Make the Tongue Test. If, when you run the tip of your tongue over your teeth, you feel a filmy coating, you need Irium — the super-cleanser in Pepsodent. Irium flushes away film, polishes teeth brilliantly . . . makes sure you'll always look lovely when you smile.

1/3 & 2/3 Inc. Tax.
Also made in Powder Form

NOTICE TO USERS OF RIZLA CIGARETTE MACHINES

A NEW Band for your machine of specially treated paper can be obtained from most tobaeconists for 1d. It will wear and clean as good as the original rubber fabric one, and is easily fitted.

Thousands of unused Rizla Machines are lying about. If you have one in your house why not give it to a friend who can use it? Or offer it to your Tobacconist who may know of someone who would be glad of it.

RIZLA CIGARETTE PAPERS FILTER TIPS and MACHINES

WHAT EVERY WOMAN OUGHT TO KNOW *about cooking with Dried Eggs*

1 To get best results with dried eggs, be careful about reconstituting. First beat out lumps against side of the basin with a spoon; then add *half* the water, mix till all lumps have disappeared, then add rest of water and stir till smooth as cream.

2 When making cakes or puddings, add the dried eggs *dry* to the other ingredients and add the water afterwards. As dried eggs are whole eggs, with the white and yolk blended together, you're sure to get an even mixture every time.

3 An omelette is easier and quicker to make with dried eggs.

Four reminders:
(1) see that your fat is "smoking" hot before pouring in eggs;
(2) cook *quickly*;
(3) don't overcook;
(4) serve immediately eggs are "set."

4 Eggs are a protein food like meat and fish, and dried eggs have exactly the same nutritional value as shell eggs. So, be liberal with your egg dishes — especially for the children!

Don't mix dried eggs with water till you are ready to use them.

A packet of 12 Dried Eggs costs only 1/3

Issued by the Ministry of Food, London, W.1

Think in-STEAD

WARTIME Pifco SHARPEX RAZOR BLADE SHARPENER
Make one blade last a year with a
Obtainable from good-class Chemists and Ironmongers
4/6

LAST LAUGH

W. K. (Wembley).—"A Brains Trust speaker said that the notes of the piano are arranged in the best possible order." Disheartened pianists should remember that the "Warsaw Concerto" is all there on the keyboard. It is only necessary to play the notes in the right order.

F. G. (London).—"The soldier's standing after the last great war did not tend to make him poetical." He certainly would be a genius who was inspired by a view of an employment exchange.

F. F. (Stockport).—"There is no credit in putting on airs, is there?" No, but it has been known to put off creditors.

JACK (Epping).—"While cycling through the forest I had my cap knocked off by a cock pheasant." We can only suppose that you neglected to raise it to the hen bird!

HOUSEWIFE (Letchworth).—"If spinach is unobtainable, the next best thing is a dish of boiled nettles." We have decided to wait until you tell us what is the next best thing but one.

A. L. (Acton).—"A dramatic critic who disappeared for three days has returned saying that he took an unexpected holiday." There was considerable anxiety when it was discovered that his stall had not been slept in.

W. B. (Barnstaple).—"In New Zealand a pigeon missing for nearly five years after a race has returned to its home loft." It must have taken some considerable time for the bird to coo a satisfactory explanation to its indignant wife and family.

D. N. (Hull).—"Does Hitler really know just where we shall invade in Western Europe?" Not unless he is shaved by the same barber as we are every morning.

MRS. L. (Chepstow).—"There was a sudden knock on the door, and who do you think was there when I opened it?" The person who knocked?

S. S. (Wimbledon).—"Most boys seem to favour the R.A.F. Why?" They want to move in the highest circles.

OLD BILL: BY BRUCE BAIRNSFATHER

"That's a h'officer's cane o' course, fat'ead. What the 'ell did yer think it was? A stick o' de'ydrated beer, to suck when he's thirsty?"

Side-Slips

SUNDAY MAIL:—". . . to see a penalty PICK awarded when . . ."

NOTTINGHAM JOURNAL: "In my informant's view it includes EATING CREAN AND HIS ORCHESTRA."

GLASGOW EVENING CITIZEN: ". . . was sent to prison for thirty WAYS when . . ."

LANCASHIRE DAILY POST: ". . . children and MOTHS are being evacuated . . ."

GREATEST OF THESE

● Demobilisation? Final discharge? Millions dream of it.

They look for a fair deal when they have crushed Hitlerism and set the Rising Sun of Japanese militarism on a setting course.

The country will demand it.

But, meantime, there are the men whose Service careers end before any cut-and-dried plan has been prepared.

Such a man is Edward James Mottershead.

Edward Mottershead

Rheumatoid arthritis has turned him into a poor travesty of the warrior who fought at Dunkirk.

It makes it almost impossible for him to work.

So picture Edward Mottershead striving to rehabilitate himself in civil life before the plan has been prepared that will give him justice.

Pension £1 8s. 9d. a week, sick benefit 18s. Rent 7s. 9½d., insurance 3s.

Out of the balance there's himself and wife to keep, Beryl aged two, and the new baby, who costs rather a lot of money, as new babies do.

It doesn't leave much to bring a little happiness into semi-invalidism, to get new strength to do a job.

He has truly tried. It has yielded him no more than six weeks of work in the five months since his discharge.

His wife's ring has had to go. His suit.

Help us to see that Mottershead (and others like him who seek our help) get the little help that means so much.

Send what you can, however small, to the Secretary, JOHN BULL War Sufferers' Fund.* Box 44, 64, Long Acre, London, W.C.2. We bear all administrative expenses. And we will gladly send a list of current subscriptions on request.

*Registered under the War Charities Act, 1940, as "The JOHN BULL War Sufferers' Fund."

RESULT OF "BULLETS" No. 1,404

FIRST PRIZE £100

A. H. Todd, 65, Mill Lane, Reading, for this "Bullet":—

GOOD GENERALSHIP REDUCED MONTGOMERY TO "MONTY"!

£10: J. Pritchard, 19, Wallasey Rd., Wallasey, Ches.
Victory Will Come, But—Through "Hammering," Not Glamouring.

£5: C. H. Simms, 39, Surrey Rd., Reading.
Price We Pay—Buying Gollywog—By Golly!

£4: Mrs. E. Moore, 11, Parsons Rd., Redditch.
When The War Ends—Cheers—Tears—More Fears!

£3: W. Whitaker, 65, Conway Road, Cwmparc, Treorchy, Glam.
Price We Pay—"Milestone"? Also "Foundation-stone"!

£2: W. W. Hughes, 1, Twining Place, Cleethorpes.
Murderer Hitler—In Damned Spot!

NO "BULLETIN" THIS WEEK NEXT ISSUE SAT., JAN. 1

6 PRIZES OF 30s.

G. Bradshaw, 2, Old Inverkip Rd., Greenock
Ready To Jump—Auntie, As Leap-year Dawns!
Mrs. L. Catone, 50a, Fore St., Totnes.
Voice Of The Slum—And Salvoes, Ending Fanfares.
M. Morgan, 66, Jersey Rd., Bleangwyll, Glam.
His Old Job—Or New? Or Queue?
F. Smith, 184, High St., West Melton, Yorks.
When The Nightmare Ends—"Greed" Mustn't Cause Another.
A. R. Tennant, 71, Caledon Rd., Nottingham
Citizen Of The Future—Sucking Thumbs—Later, Twiddling?
J. Williamson, 11, Wigdermere Rd., Stockport
Boon For The Firemen—Incendiary—Thawed Village Pump!

A Bet of 100 winners of Christmas Cakes can be seen at these offices; 1,000 Merit Awards have been posted.

OVER 300 PRIZES WON IN "LAUGH-LINES" 146

Most meritorious entries were decided by Adjudication Committee to be those bearing the 4 KEY LETTERS in order H—A—C—J entered by following 3 competitors, who thus share £30, each also receiving Nine Guineas: D. R. Burrows 187, St. John Street, Lichfield, Staffs; W. H. Johnson, 35, Long Elmes, Harrow Weald; Miss Alice Sherlock, 188, Upper Brook St., C.-on-M., Manchester.

Award for 1st Runners-up shared between 38 entrants with FIRST THREE letters in order shown. 2nd Runners-up Awards for 266 entrants with FIRST TWO.

XWORD RESULT IN "GAZETTE" DATED JAN. 1.

"...and the LIGHTS will come back"

Have you ever thought that kiddies are growing up who have never seen a lighted street lamp? It is a strange world that children are living in to-day, and yet they are thriving.

'Milk of Magnesia' has done a good job in helping to keep the health standard of children high by correcting minor upsets of the digestion, so important in the 'growing-up' period.

By helping to safeguard our children, 'Milk of Magnesia' is assisting in building the sound health of the men and women of to-morrow.

'MILK OF MAGNESIA'

'Milk of Magnesia' is the trade mark of Phillips' preparation of magnesia

How to shift a Stubborn Cold

That beastly cough which simply won't go—here's the way to get rid of it. There's an old-fashioned recipe which has grown so popular that chemists everywhere are keeping it made up, bottled and ready for use. It's the "Parmint" recipe.

One dose of this Parmint Syrup will ease the most stubborn cough. A few more will start to clear it right away. Just try it and see.

It's grand for children, too. Quite safe and with a flavour kiddies positively like.

Be wise. Get a bottle of Parmint Syrup from your chemist to-day and keep it handy. 1/5 the bottle including tax.

NOTE.—If you want to make it up yourself, ask for a 1 oz. bottle of the Parmint Concentrated Essences (price 3/1½). It is even more economical that way.

SPIRIT OF WARMTH IN **Victory V** GUMS and LOZENGES

Famous the name and quality

3d. PER OZ.

FROM A doctor's diary

This is based on a doctor's experience of cases of V.D. It has been carefully edited so that the people concerned shall not be recognised.

"...It's not nearly as serious, is it, doctor?"

I'm often asked that about gonorrhœa. But gonorrhœa can be serious enough if it's allowed to get a grip on the system.

Only a few days ago I saw a patient of 30. When he was 19, he caught gonorrhœa while he was under the influence of drink. He was so ashamed of what he'd done that, when irritation and discharge started, and he knew he'd got gonorrhœa, he couldn't face going to a doctor or a clinic. Then, after a few weeks of discomfort, the symptoms started to pass off, and he thought he was getting better of his own accord.

He was wrong—as the sequel shows. In due course, he got married. His one lapse was just an unpleasant memory. He hadn't been married more than a week when his wife noticed she had a slight discharge. She also took no notice of it, and after a while it disappeared. A little later, she had a bad attack of pain in the stomach; but it passed off and didn't come to operation.

When I saw the husband last week, they'd been married 6 years and badly wanted children, but no children had come. Also he'd been having difficulty in passing his water. I examined him and then got him to bring his wife.

The facts are quite clear. He had never really got rid of his gonorrhœa. It was just lying quiet. He had given his wife the disease and her attack of pain had been internal inflammation caused by the gonorrhœa germ. As a result, she will never be able to have children. The germ has done him permanent mischief too, and if he is to avoid trouble with his water, he will have to have instruments passed about every 3 months for the rest of his life. The pity of it all is that it could have been so easily avoided.

It's rare enough for gonorrhœa to kill but if neglected it can do just as much harm as syphilis, by preventing children being born, and by causing permanent ill-health.

Gonorrhœa can be cured if it's treated *thoroughly*, and, of course, the earlier it's treated the better. To the doctor it's just another disease to be attacked and overcome—he won't regard his patient as an outcast or read him a lecture."

FREE CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE AND TREATMENT are available at clinics set up by County and County Borough Councils. Any doctor will give the address. Further information can be obtained IN CONFIDENCE from the Health Department at your local Council's offices, or by writing to the Medical Adviser, Central Council for Health Education, Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1. Please send stamped addressed envelope.

Issued by the Ministry of Health and the Central Council for Health Education
(VD-21-27)

Christmas Greetings

TO "JOHN BULL'S" COMPETITORS—AND MANY PRIZES IN 1944!

DOUBLE PRIZES in this amusing 5-MINUTE CONTEST!

IT'S QUICK—IT'S EASY!

HERE'S just the thing for a few minutes of your Christmas leisure—an entertaining little £50 Contest in which you can chuckle your way to a Cheque and a Cake!

Following simple instructions on your coupon below, fill in FOUR KEY LETTERS to form your entry. Most important of all—see that you post off your coupon by Monday, January 3.

£50 CASH FIRST PRIZE — HUNDREDS of other AWARDS for 1st & 2nd RUNNERS-UP

4lb. FRUIT CAKES WITH ALL CASH PRIZES

XWORDS Send 1d. stamp for Gazette with big new Xword Offer to: Gazette Dept., 1, Slingsby Place, London, W.C.2.

A. When The Siren Went—Tomcat Recalled Forgotten "Date"!
B. Upset The Lodger—Overhearing "He's Eaten It!"
C. Wifey's Photo—Lifelike—"Dropped On Henpeck"!
D. What Auntie Needs—New Umbrella—Burglar, Ribs!
E. At The Sergeant's Wedding—"Blimey—She's *Kissing* Him!"
F. Like A Thunderbolt—My Clap—Symphony Unfinished!
H. Thinking Hard—Scratching Skull's Head, Professor!
J. Grim Warning—"Now, Henry—No Sirens!"
K. Uproar In The Pub—Fortunately Only *Blood* Spilt!

GIVE KEY LETTERS of 4 BEST "LAUGH LINES" ENTRY COLS. BELOW

HOW YOU CAN WIN £50

Carefully select the FOUR most humorous, apt and original "Bullets" from list. Then show your judgment of their order of merit by giving FOUR KEY LETTERS ONLY in column of this entry coupon. Additional columns for extra attempts if desired. Address entry as at foot of page—or enclose with Bullets entry.

1ST						
2ND						
3RD						
4TH						

FEE 2d PER COL Is. FOR 6

I agree to Rules and enclose the correct P.O. or stamps entry-fee, including 1d. for "Bullets" Bulletin dated Jan. 15.

P.O. Value..... No.....
Signed .....
Address .....

CLOSING POSTMARK MONDAY, JAN. 3.

148

"LAUGH-LINES" RESULT PAGE 14—COMPETITION RULES IN NEXT ISSUE

CHEQUES RADIO and 50 FAMILY FEASTS!

FIRST £50 CASH plus £25 RADIO

£10 £5 £4 £3 £2 6 30/- 1000 MERIT AWARDS

FINE 4lb. FRUIT CAKES for 50 ENTRANTS

THIS WAY to a "BULLETS" PRIZE

TO make a Bullet simply add TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the Examples below. Winners on page 14 show you various ways to score. Joy Wire Day—Friday, Jan. 14.

COMING IN 1944
ALL NATIONS
LAND OF PLENTY
WE MAINTAIN
FORTRESS OF EUROPE
FUGITIVE FROM JUSTICE
POINTS THE WAY
NAZI RATS
ANOTHER WAR
SOMETIMES FORGOTTEN

BULLETS 1,404 RESULT appears on page 14

BIT OF A BLOW
PARTY POLITICS
ONE THING'S CERTAIN
LAID THE FOUNDATION
FOR A CHANGE
MISSES NOTHING
HOLY MATRIMONY
SHOWS THINGS ARE BAD
RADIO COMEDIAN
WE DO OUR BEST, BUT

Six "Examples" below for completion with any ONE additional word of your choice in the position indicated by dotted line. Make "Bullets" from them as usual.

DAD LOST HIS.....AND
TO SAVE.....
NOT AFRAID OF .....
APPEALS TO.....
ONCE A.....
IN THE THROES OF .....

EXAMPLE
BULLET
EXAMPLE
BULLET
EXAMPLE
BULLET
EXAMPLE
BULLET

2 FREE BULLETS allowed with 4 paid—enter in blank margin below.

I agree to enter in accordance with the Rules and enclose P.O. or stamps entry-fee at the rate of 6d. for each two paid Bullets, no remittance including 1d. for "Bullets" Bulletin dated Jan. 15. IF INK RUNS, USE PLAIN PAPER OF COUPON SIZE.

P.O. Value .....
No. .....
Closing Postmark, 1,407 Monday, JAN. 3
Signed .....
Address .....

ADDRESS ENTRY "Bullets" 1,407—or "Laugh-Lines" 149, "JOHN BULL," LONG ACRE, LONDON, W.C.2. (Comp.).

ENGINEERING OPPORTUNITIES

This unique handbook shows the easy way to secure A.M.I. Mech.E., A.M.Brit. I.R.E., A.M.I.E.E., City & Guilds, etc.

We Guarantee — "No pass—No Fee." Details are given of over 150 Diploma Courses in all branches of Civil, Mech., Elec., Motor, Aero, Radio, Television and Production Engineering, Tracing, Building, Govt. Employment, R.A.F. Maths., Matric, etc.

Think of the Future and send for your copy at once—FREE.

B.I.E.T.,
56, SHAKESPEARE HOUSE,
17, STRATFORD PLACE,
LONDON, W.1.

Nerves and Digestion? ..more Vitamin B

DOCTORS know that if your Nerves are to keep steady and strong during these trying times; if, in fact, your Nervous System is to be nourished properly, your food must contain greater supplies than ever of the essential Vitamin B . . . and they know that the richest natural source of this life-giving Vitamin is *pure* 'LIVE' *Yeast*.

PHILLIPS Tonic Yeast is LIVE Yeast in its purest and most concentrated form. One ounce of PHILLIPS contains 17 times more Vitamin B, than ½-lb. Beef Steak—and you get extra nourishment from all your food.

Take PHILLIPS Yeast with your meals, you'll be amazed at the improvement in NERVES and DIGESTION and its WONDERFUL TONIC EFFECTS. It gives LIFE AND VITALITY to all.

A DOCTOR writes:
"I am having 'most excellent results from your preparation—far exceeding any other Yeast."

Ask for PHILLIPS TONIC YEAST the Yeast WITHOUT DRUGS

All Chemists 1/3, 3/- Tablets

Phillips TONIC YEAST —It's LIFE ITSELF!

A Natural Corrective

Lixen—the palatable, easy-to-take laxative has a gentle, natural action which is at once effective and without painful after-effects. It is prepared from senna pods by a special process which renders its mild, aperient action equally pleasant for old or young.

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Made in England by ALLEN & HANBURYS LTD.

LIXEN *Laxative*

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CATARRH HEAD COLDS, 'FLU

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SCIENTIFIC NASAL REMEDY

All Chemists 1/3, Tax Extra

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ROYAL NAVY
H.M. FORCES OVERSEAS

(INCLUDING INDIA BUT EXCLUDING P.O.W. IN JAPANESE HANDS)

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cost the sender less than quarter of the ordinary prices. Packed in vacuum tins they ensure arrival at destination in perfect condition. Supplies bought over the counter are not suitably packed to stand up to hot climates, so ask your tobacconist for DUTY FREE particulars and he will arrange to despatch a single parcel or, if desired, a standing order at regular intervals.

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P.S.—Include Regimental or Prisoner-of-War number of the Addressee.

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Beecham's Pills

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ENOUGH RUBBER TO EQUIP 6,000 ARMY LORRIES WITH TYRES
WENT UP IN SMOKE
WHEN A STORAGE DEPOT WAS SET ON FIRE BY A LIGHTED CIGARETTE END
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EVERY MINUTE OF THE DAY AND NIGHT A FIRE BREAKS OUT IN BRITAIN. MOST OF THESE FIRES ARE CAUSED BY CIGARETTES OR MATCHES
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Issued for the Fire Offices' Committee as part of a National Campaign organised by Government Departments concerned

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